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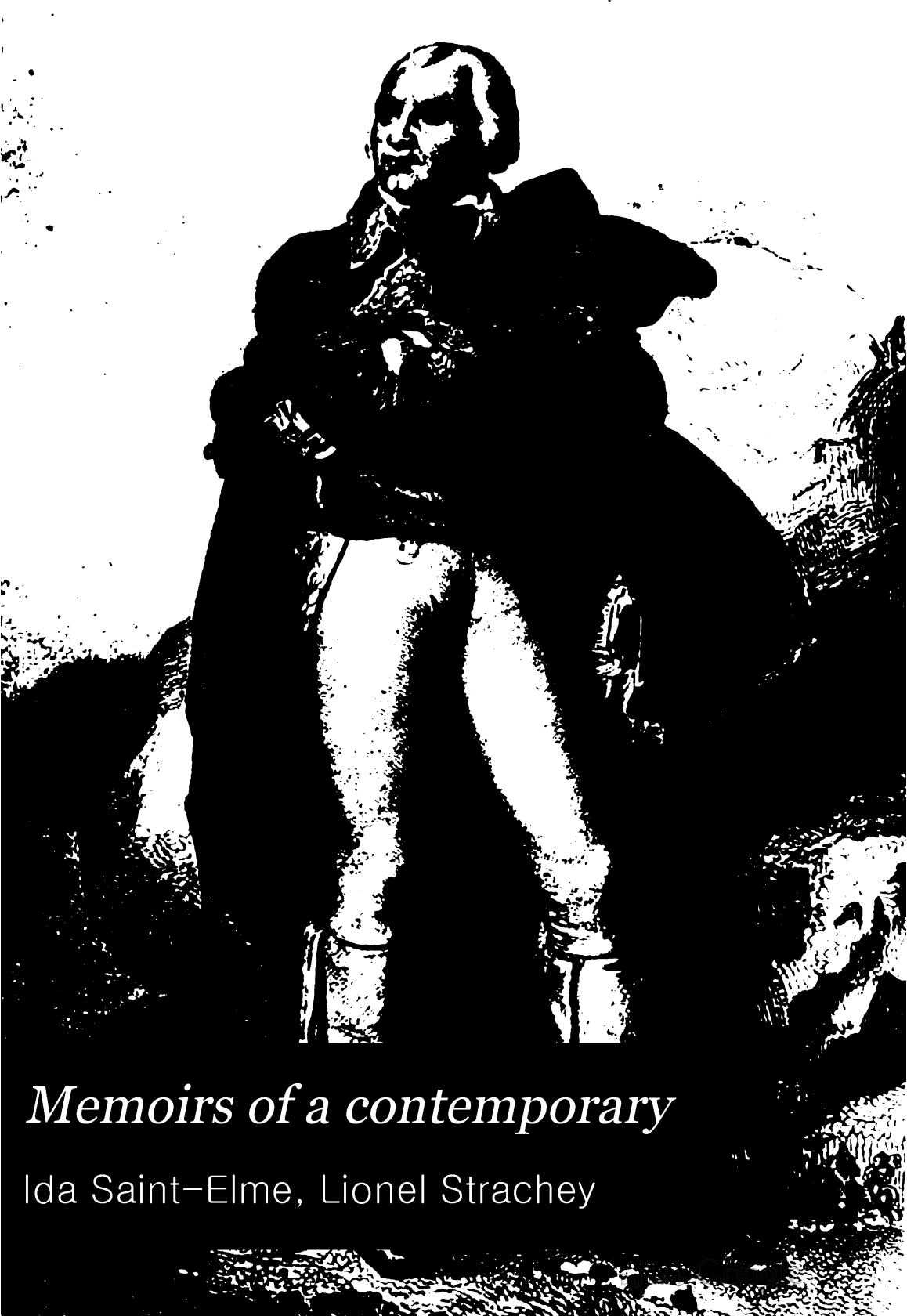

Memoirs of a contemporary

Ida Saint-Elme, Lionel Strachey

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IDA St ELME,

Auteur des Mémoires d'une Contemporaine

Lithographiée d'après nature à l'âge de 50 ans, époque de son séjour [illegible]

J'ai vécu dans un temps de révolutions, j'ai beaucoup lu, j'ai souvent réfléchi, je me suis occupée d'histoire, de voyages et de guerres, de l'empire et des empereurs, j'ai été une femme et je suis encore une femme, j'ai été un enfant et j'ai encore [illegible] femme, j'ai triomphé de Waterloo et j'ai pleuré à Waterloo.

Ida St Elme

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Memoirs
of a
Contemporary

Being Reminiscences by Ida Saint-Elme, Adventuress, of her Acquaintance with Certain Makers of French History, and of her Opinions Concerning them. From 1790 to 1815.

Translated by Lionel Strachey

Illustrated

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CHAPTER I

THE AUTHORESS' DESCENT — HER BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD— EARLY AMAZONIAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS—MARRIAGE AT THE AGE OF TWELVE WITH VAN M—— — HIS POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS—REMOVED TO FRANCE—CAPTAIN MARESCOT'S ADMIRATION — WHICH EVOKES RESPONSE — THE FIRST DOWNWARD STEP — DEPARTURE FOR PARIS — VAN M—— JOINS THE ARMY — THE "CONTEMPORARY" DONS MALE ATTIRE — AND WITNESSES THE BATTLE OF VALMY — RETURN TO HOLLAND — ATTENTIONS FROM GENERAL GROUCHY.

I AM a daughter of Count Leopold Ferdinand Tolstoy, who was born in 1749 at the castle of Werborn, on the seigneurial estate of Krustova, in Hungary. Himself was a son of Samuel Leopold de Tolstoy, Duke of Cremnitz, and of Catherine Vevoy, Countess Thuroz. My grandmother was the mother of the Polish *starost* Beniowski. Upon the decease of my grandfather, whose widow soon followed him to the grave, my father took arms in the Austrian service with his uncle Beniowski, he having attached himself to the fortunes of Archduke Charles of Lorraine. My father was then nineteen years of age. Outraged, however, at the unjust treatment to which he was subjected, he made his way to Russia where he was soon joined by Beniowski, and where this

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nobleman was honoured with an exalted charge by the Empress. Beniowski did his utmost to bring about a match between his nephew and a very rich Russian lady of great family. But my father's heart became engaged in another quarter. He eloped with the daughter of the governor of Pressburg, Ida Kornewitz, fleeing with her across the Russian border.

My father's only patrimony was his ancestral name of Tolstoy, which was one of great renown. He offered it to his lady-love. But Ida refused to allow him to make this sacrifice. Only for a brief moment did she surrender to the embraces of the youth for whom she had relinquished home and country, but whose future she would not consent to prejudice. Tearing herself away from the illusions of love, she separated from the world forever, and devoted the remainder of her days to the service of God. Leopold, unable to shake her resolve, escorted her to the abbey of Novgorod. He then returned to Saint Petersburg, where his uncle Beniowski lavished a truly paternal affection upon him.

Resuming the plans of marriage he had entertained for his nephew's benefit, he tried to persuade him to take the hand of the only daughter of Count Penski, whose dowry would amount to a million roubles. Leopold's only condition was that he should first make the acquaintance of the lady whose happiness was to be entrusted to him. An interview was arranged. But at the sight of the ungainly figure and very uncomely face of the countess, who was to be his wife, the heir of the Tolstoys manifested a decided repugnance to the prospective marriage. The young lady was too ugly. Neither entreaties, threats, nor anything availed to influence my father's inflexible will, and in order to escape incarceration he was obliged to make a rapid flight. From Saint Petersburg he betook himself to Dantsic, where he embarked for Hamburg. From Hamburg he went

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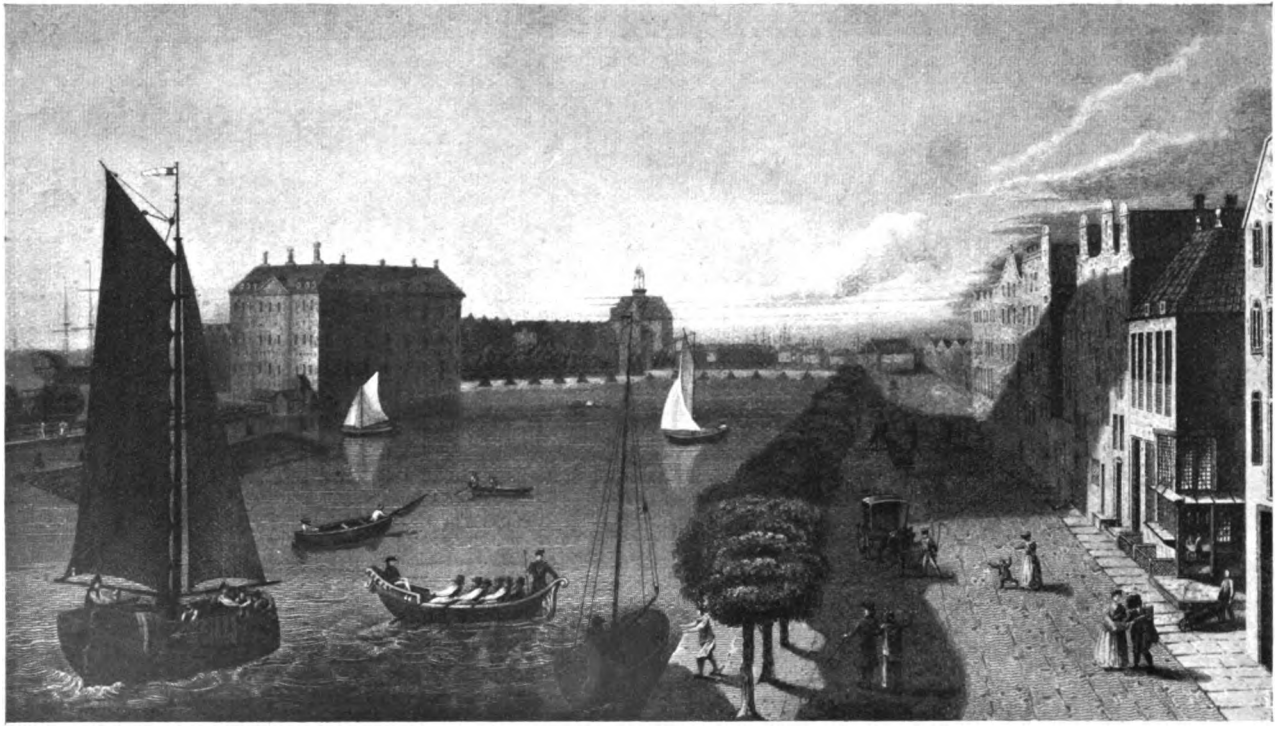

AMSTERDAM TOWARD THE ZUYDER ZEE
(*About the Year* 1800)

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to Amsterdam, finally reaching The Hague in 1774. Here his name opened the doors of the Dutch nobility to him, and the stadholder's court as well.

My father was then twenty-five years old. His tall, shapely figure, the picturesque Hungarian dress to which he always remained faithful, his ardent gaze, the beauty of his features, and the qualities of his mind and heart were easily sufficient to account for the violent passion soon conceived for him by a daughter of one of the oldest and wealthiest of Holland's noble houses, which passion was returned by the handsome foreigner.

My mother, then eighteen years of age and an orphan, had been endowed with great beauty by nature. The highest and most complete sort of education had developed her mentally and brought out her finest moral traits. She was heiress to an income of sixteen hundred thousand florins, to be left her by an old maiden-aunt, who, however, imposed a certain condition. In the event of her niece marrying, the husband must change his name to his wife's. Otherwise Mademoiselle van Aylde Jonghe would forfeit all claim to the succession, and the entire legacy would go to charitable institutions.

Count Tolstoy was far too deeply enamoured of the lady to hesitate between the happiness to be derived from the union and mere considerations of family pride. He therefore resigned the illustrious name of his forefathers to assume the other.

Reasons of health induced the young couple to leave the foggy climate of Holland for the sunny skies of Italy. Thus it was in Tuscany that I first saw the light of day, in one of the most charming districts of the Arno, on the 26th of September, 1778.

I learnt to speak the French, Dutch, and Italian languages at the same time. I made rapid progress in them all as I grew up. My father, besides, established a riding ring, a fencing floor, and a tennis court on his

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property. I was barely six when I went for wild gallops on my Hungarian pony, with my parents on either side closely watching me. My father also gave me instructions in fencing, and was very proud of the skill I showed in that art. The day I matriculated, amid the plaudits of all our friends, assembled for the auspicious event, my joy knew no bounds. With my pad still on my body and my gauntlets on my hands, and flourishing my foil, my heart beat terribly fast when my mother took off my mask to kiss me. I threw myself into her arms bursting into tears.

I was but nine when, cruel fate depriving us of our fortune through a crisis in the East Indies, we returned to Holland. Soon after this my father died. Two years went by before my mother had overcome her grief enough to attend to her daughter's further education. But little Elzelina—this was my name—was happily constituted. My mind, tired of idleness, began to roam in quest of new sensations. It was easy enough to find them. My mother, full of confidence in the prudence and discretion of her precocious child, saw nothing improper in allowing me to take long rides about the estate where we lived. I must hasten to add that although I was only eleven years old, I was big enough to pass for fourteen. In face and figure I was almost a woman. But as far as sense went I was still an infant.

A year later I was a wife. My marriage was attended by somewhat romantic circumstances.

Every morning I used to go out on horseback, accompanied by our old groom, William. One day, in the course of my ride, I met a very agreeable young man. He bowed and spoke to me. I learnt that his name was M. van M——, and that he was the son of a wealthy landowner of that neighbourhood. For several days we continued to meet in the same manner. My mother raising objections, I ceased from meeting M. van M——

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on horse-back, but granted him appointments, twice a week, in a little arbour, at the bottom of the garden, without my mother's knowledge. At these innocent trysts I gave my new friend lessons in Italian, and extended my own knowledge of Dutch through conversations with him in that language. However, M. van M—— soon conceived a strong, deep, and sincere passion for me, of the kind peculiar to his nation. He was then twenty-three, and his intentions were honourable. Before long he acquainted me with his resolve to ask my mother for my hand in marriage. I had never thought of marriage, the indissoluble tie which, according to the church, only death can sever. At the age of twelve life seems so very long! I entertained some doubts on the subject at first, and felt tempted to decline, but my vanity was flattered; I liked M. van M—— very well, and gave him permission to apply to my mother.

She, although looking upon my suitor very favourably, was opposed to the match because of my extreme youth. The young man's father, on his side, categorically forbade the union on account of the disparity in our fortunes. Hereupon my friend suggested that we should elope to Gelderland, where a Protestant minister could easily be found who would marry us. I consented, quite proud of being run away with like a grown up person. The plot succeeded, but alas! the very evening of our flight my lover's father caught us! M van M—— persistently reiterated his firm intention of marrying me, declaring that I had entrusted myself to his honour. Nobody should separate us, he said, nor should prevent us from becoming man and wife. His father finally yielded upon condition that I should remain in my mother's care until the day of the wedding. So I returned, and after all formalities had been fulfilled, was married in the new house of worship of the Reformed Church, at Amsterdam.

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I was under thirteen, but my figure was already fully developed, so that I looked at least sixteen. I am now no larger than I was then, and in fact have not grown since my marriage. But unfortunately my brain was very far from being mature. I required a firmer and sterner guide than the husband to whom the law and my own consent had bound me for all time. Why did he trust so blindly in the wisdom and circumspection of a child? Had he not done so, I should not now be regretting the misfortunes and mistakes of more than twenty-five years.

The first six months went by to the complete happiness of us both. The travelling for pleasure which according to the Dutch custom is the sequel to every marriage was over, and we were settling down to a quiet domestic life when rumours of war and the news of the revolution spreading in France turned our thoughts in another direction. The revolutionary turmoil was agitating Belgium as well as France. My husband had large estates in Belgium, and was one of the opponents of the royalist party in Holland. Nothing more natural, therefore, than for him to ardently espouse the principles enounced in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. He did his utmost to make me share his views and to kindle his own enthusiasm in me. I was easily converted, for I had no decided political opinions. Van M—— spoke to me of love of country and of the blessings of liberty which were soon to be the heritage of all nations. His warm, convincing language quickly aroused the same sentiments in my receptive bosom that were glowing in his.

While my husband was shut up in his study with long despatches brought by frequent messengers, I would go for considerable rides on horseback, or else would indulge my taste for reading, or would write letters to my mother. This manner of living suited me. When-

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ever I felt in a mood for love-making I would go to my husband in his study. I would scold him for neglecting me. I would even pretend to doubt his love. He always succeeded in justifying himself very readily, and our little arguments would end in a way that speedily drew us as close together as ever in the bonds of mutual attachment.

One evening, as we were sitting in a pavilion on our estate which was near the roadside, we were surprised by the sudden appearance of M. van Daulen, one of my husband's most intimate friends. Van M—— had a long talk with him; at the end of which he informed me that next morning we should leave the country, only to return with the future liberators of Holland, the soldiers of the French Republic. The journey upon which I was about to set forth, and the importance it gave me in my own eyes as to the events in which my husband would no doubt play a great part, all this excited my imagination. I at once began to pregare for our departure. All was in readiness that same night, and early the next morning we left in a post-chaise.

A relative of my husband, General Daendels, was serving with the French colours, and it was him we were to join. Van M—— owned large estates in the vicinity of Brussels, on the road to Antwerp, so that I soon found myself comfortably established in a fine country mansion near the gates of the Belgian capital.

Upon this estate we spent two months. We received visits from a number of young men who were friends of my husband, and who were as enthusiastic in favour of the French Revolution as himself. In spite of his youth van M—— was held in high esteem in society. He owed this less to his immense wealth than to his personal qualities, to the devotion he showed for his country, to the single-hearted liberality with which he gave his fortune to the cause he believed in. Some of the most

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agreeable men of our circle tried to captivate me, but they one and all failed. I have never been attracted except by superior worth, and when I looked about me at this time I saw no one of eminent moral attributes. My heart therefore remained free.

Towards the end of August, 1792, we left our house near Brussels and started for Lille. My husband proposed to stay for some time in that town in order to gather information there as to the cause of events before penetrating further into France. In Lille preparations were going forward to resist the siege which threatened that town. It actually occurred soon after our departure, and redounded greatly to the credit of the inhabitants. At first we were not able to find access to the place at all. We were obliged to take lodgings at an inn on the outskirts of one of the suburbs. General Daendels, a cousin of my husband, came to visit us in our modest abode as soon as he was apprised of our arrival. He was accompanied by several French officers. I will mention one only, young Marescot, an engineer officer, who later on became a lieutenant-general and a member of the Institute of France. M. de Marescot had a prepossessing exterior, and appeared to be gifted with the qualities that usually evoke respect or interest. During the whole length of our relative's visit the officers with him frequently turned unmistakable looks of admiration upon me. But I singled out Marescot from among them all.

My husband's fortune and rank, his determination to forsake his country rather than abjure his political opinion, my youthfulness, and my personal appearance, made us the subject of much attention and curiosity. We were very soon given a proof of the sympathy we inspired by the eagerness with which some French officers exerted themselves to find us lodgings in the centre of the town and to escort us there them-

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THE TOWN HALL, BRUSSELS
(*From an Old German Print*)

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selves. In a few days every house in Lille was open to us. My husband's activity in the cause of liberty in the Netherlands brought him into daily contact with the officers of the French army. The result was that I was perpetually meeting Marescot. He was then but a plain captain, but owing to his proved talents, his bravery, and his amiable disposition he was just as highly considered as other officers who were older, or were his superiors in military rank. I must confess that I felt embarrassed and abashed in his presence, and that at the same time I experienced sensations of mingled pleasure and uneasiness. I was always glad to see him, but nevertheless the anticipation would always give me a feeling of trepidation.

A great public festivity took place to which my husband and I were invited. I was the cynosure of all eyes and the centre of attraction, but in the midst of all the compliments and the flattery, I could not conceal the fact that I was impressed only by the homage of him whom my heart had chosen. Thenceforth a secret understanding was established between myself and Marescot, which progressed very rapidly, and which I at first innocently believed was founded upon ordinary good feeling. I was scarcely fifteen years old. I was far from my mother's care. My husband exercised no control whatever over my conduct. I was too young to be without any guides but my own judgment and my inexperienced heart.

Thus, lulled in safety, I was really hastening towards destruction. The uncertainty of the future, the pain of the separation,—that I already dreaded,—and the fear of some day hearing of his death in battle, drew me more and more to him in whom I at last became completely infatuated. I was deeply in love with him before I knew whether it was love or not. When I realized the true state of affairs it was too late to go back. The fatal step was already taken.

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Marescot at length went away leaving me with grief and remorse for companions.

The French troops were gaining victories everywhere. Van M—— and General Daendels being charged with an important mission, we left suddenly for Paris. But in the world of the great capital I was no more able to enjoy peace and happiness than I had been at Lille after Marescot's departure. I saw all the celebrities of the day; I was received in circles where Revolutionary equality often vied in ostentation with the old aristocracy. But there was nothing to please me in these gatherings. The men showed that they were rude and uneducated; their compliments were coarse; the addresses they paid me were for the most part unendurable. I gratified as far as I could my inclination for a solitary life in the large mansion we were occupying in the Rue de Bourbon, whose garden, touching upon the quay, was a delightful sojourn. Ever since Marescot had left me I had never been able to recover my tranquillity of mind or my peace of heart. I would shed tears all day. I deeply repented my fault while ravished at the receipt of the rare letters written by my friend from headquarters.

There was no friend whom I might have confided in and asked for counsel. Neglected by my husband, who gave himself up entirely to public affairs, I could not but compare his coldness with the impassioned tenderness that burned in Marescot's letters. I thought of nothing but the happy day which would bring my friend back to me.

The most disastrous news now reached Paris in quick succession; the entrance into France of the Prussians, unlucky engagements, the reduction of Longwy, the capitulation of Verdun, and the voluntary death of the valiant commandant of that fortress. My husband left the capital to join the army with General Dumouriez, and I decided to share my husband's perils in the war

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(Drawn by Bonneville, Engraved by Claesens)

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for which he had volunteered. I put aside the garments of my sex, and assumed the dress of a man. I witnessed the battle of Valmy from close quarters. At seven o'clock in the morning, as soon as the fog was dissipated, the Prussians deployed along the heights of la Lune, their cavalry taking the Châlons road, fifty or sixty cannon being massed in front. The French and Prussian artillery exchanged intermittent volleys. During the morning two of our powder waggons exploded, which gave rise to some momentary confusion. About noon the enemy grouped his infantry in three close columns, and threatened an attack upon Valmy. This movement was executed with remarkable precision. General Kellermann's troops then also formed in three columns, although in a less orderly manner than the Prussians. General Beurnonville advanced to support the troops in Valmy. Shouts of "Long live the nation!" rang along the whole line. The soldiers were fired with enthusiasm. This shouting and a brisk cannonade made the enemy apprehensive, and they thereupon retired in good order. I was so fortunate as to be present on that memorable day, which French history celebrates as the battle of Valmy, the first exploit of the Republican army. If the inferiority in number of the French indicated the chance of a reverse, the courage and skill of their leaders promised them victory. General Kellermann is still before my eyes, waving his hat on the point of his sword, and giving orders for a bayonet charge upon the Prussians.

A serious illness of my mother unexpectedly called me back to Holland. I spent three months at the pillow of the dear invalid. Her recovery was long, but she finally was restored to health. Afterwards I remained with her for a part of the year 1793. We lived on a great estate surrounded by an immense park in the neighbourhood of the town of Leyden. The life I led here, buried

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in the country, was singularly monotonous compared to the exciting events of the previous year. My husband remained away and wrote frequently. I received news from Marescot at rare intervals only, because of the uncertainty of the postal service in war time, and the movements of the armies. It was known in Holland that I had gone to the war in men's clothes, and since my arrival in Leyden I had become the object of universal curiosity and gossip. The partisans of the stadholder spoke of me only in tones of indignation or profound contempt. I did not allow their opinions or their talk to affect me in the very least. But my mother, who was a faithful adherent of the court party, took it all very much to heart. In order to rescue me from what she supposed must give me great mortification, she proposed to leave Leyden and to repair to an estate she owned near Wardenburg. This was equivalent to an opportunity of being near the centre of war, and consequently in touch with the French army. I acceded to the proposition with ill-dissembled joy. But in our new abiding place three months went by very drearily. I wrote to Marescot. My letter remained unanswered. After two more months I believed myself forgotten. I shed many tears, and after giving full vent to my grief, I, in my turn, began to forget.

We would sometimes go out walking, visiting the poor, and giving them alms. At all hands blessings were invoked upon my mother and her young son, the Baron van Aylde Jonghe—by which name I usually passed. Thanks to my tall figure and my good looks, I was able to play the part of a handsome young man. My short curly hair, my large blue eyes, and my fresh complexion won me many admiring glances from the women, which afforded my mother and myself great amusement.

Several months elapsed before my husband summoned me to join him. He finally wrote for me to come to

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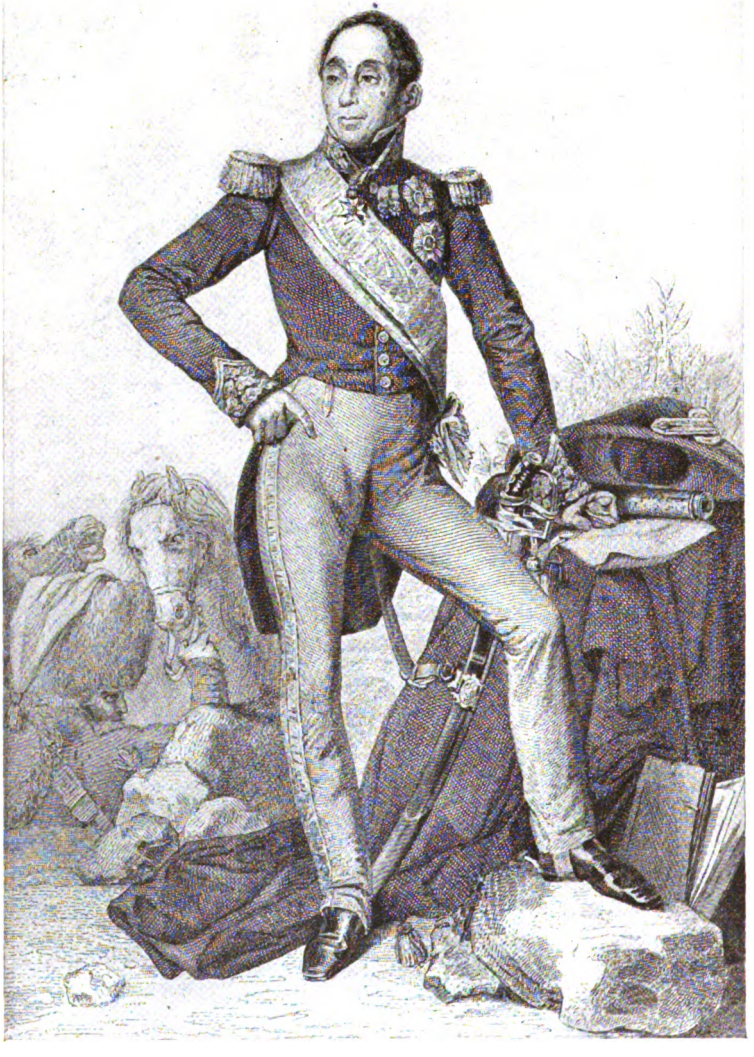

GENERAL GROUCHY
(*From Rouillard's Painting, Historical Gallery of Versailles*)

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Breda. On the way I met with the French army. My heart beat violently. Early in January, 1795, I reached Amsterdam in a magnificent sledge in the midst of a veritable staff of officers, and escorted by whole regiments to the music of military bands and the sound of cannon. The stadholder had taken ship at Scheveningen. The States-General had issued orders to the military commandants of all the towns to see to the reception and quartering of the French troops.

Among the French officers who were regular frequenters of our house General Grouchy was one of the most assiduous. The compliments he paid me flattered my vanity. M. de Grouchy then looked no more than about twenty-six or twenty-seven years old. At first sight his face was not remarkably interesting, and he was a man of ordinary size. But his urbanity and his graceful manners made him most agreeable. The Republican general maintained all the distinction of a courtier of Versailles. I have known few men so engaging as he when he wished to be so.

Engrossed more than ever in public affairs, my husband allowed me a very dangerous degree of liberty. Our house was always full of French officers: I never went out on horseback without a retinue of an entire military staff. General Grouchy was my companion at all routs and balls, and at the theatre. My carelessness was the subject of general remark, and my conduct was such as to merit the censure which I foolishly ignored.

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CHAPTER II

FRENCH INVASION OF HOLLAND — AMSTERDAM SURRENDERS TO PICHEGRU — ATTACK UPON THE DUTCH FLEET BY CAVALRY AND ARTILLERY —PICHEGRU'S INSINCERITY — MOREAU AND MARIA — PICHEGRU A POLITICAL INTRIGUER — THE "CONTEMPORARY" FIRST HEARS OF NEY — NEWS OF MARESCOT — VAN M—— LEARNS OF HIS WIFE'S RELATIONS WITH MARESCOT — VAN M—— FORGIVES HER — WHICH ANGERS HER — SHE RUNS AWAY FROM HIM.

THUS time went by in the most agreeable manner in the world. But after a few weeks had elapsed I was obliged to go to Bois-le-Duc to see my family. Generals Grouchy and Dessoles went with us as far as Utrecht. There they took another road, and I did not see them for a long time afterwards.

A hard winter was requisite to make the invasion of Holland a success, for Pichegru looked upon the invasion of this country of dykes and canals as impossible in ordinary weather. The inhabitants of Dutch Brabant were so fully convinced of this themselves that when the French boasted they would soon be sailing upon the Zuyderzee they said: "If you come we will drown you, you Frenchmen, and none of you will ever see his country again!"

In order then, that the campaign should be practicable the ice must be thick enough to bear the weight of can-

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non. At the end of December, 1794, the thermometer went down to seventeen degrees befow zero, and this was the signal for Pichegru's army, which was wretchedly provisioned and not even sufficiently clothed. It was an extraordinary campaign. One cannot but be struck by the general's audacious spirit of enterprise, but the heroism of his poorly fed and ill-clad army, which cheerfully endured the greatest hardships, must also evoke warm admiration. In less than two months the whole of Holland was brought under subjection. Regiments of infantry, field batteries, and cavalry squadrons crossed rivers and bays with such extraordinary rapidity that the commissioners of the Convention were hardly able to keep up with the troops. The day he began to invest Utrecht, Pichegru wrote to three of these representatives to hasten their movements: "Do not lose a moment, Citizen Representatives, to-morrow we shall take Utrecht." The representatives, indeed, arrived on the 19th of January and the same day received a deputation from the province of Holland authorized to treat with them as to the particulars of surrender.

The next day, the 20th of January, 1795, Pichegru, still accompanied by the representatives, entered Amsterdam, and took possession of the city in the name of the French Republic. The French were welcomed by the great majority of the people in our country as liberators and were not regarded as enemies, which was not surprising, since the Dutch had already before attempted to shake off the yoke of the stadholder. The day of the entry of the French into Amsterdam the stock exchange of the city was open as usual. There was no interruption in the operations of commerce, and liabilities were met with the usual promptitude. The conquest of Amsterdam was at once followed by the submission of the remainder of the United Provinces. A fortnight later the individual States of Zealand had

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GENERAL PICHEGRU
(*Drawn from Steuben's Oil Portrait at Versailles*)

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signed their surrender. A portion of the Dutch fleet was anchored near the mouth of the Texel. Pichegru, who wanted to forestall its escaping by means of a possible thaw, sent some squadrons of cavalry and batteries of light artillery to the North of Holland. The French squadrons crossed the ice at a gallop, and hussars and mounted artillery were seen to attack the stationary ships as though they had been a fortified position. The Dutch fleet offered little opposition to this new method of assault. At Bois-le-Duc we stayed with an uncle on my mother's side who owned an immense house, such as in Paris would have been dignified by the name of a mansion. In this house the staff of the French army was quartered, and Pichegru, the commander-in-chief of the army, was likewise lodged here. My uncle gave up the main part of the building to the staff, which thus occupied the best rooms. With his family and his servants he modestly retired to the right wing overlooking the garden. As for my husband and myself, we were welcomed with open arms. The very day of our arrival a ceremonial dinner was given in our honour, to which all the relatives of van M—— had been invited who were available. My uncle's family was composed of his wife, three daughters, and two sons. The girls were all pretty, but Maria, the youngest, entirely eclipsed the others.

Generals Pichegru and Moreau, and a few other French officers of high rank whose commands were stationed near by, were presented to us as friends of the family, and took part in this dinner. Pichegru, the head of the army of invasion, "the vanquisher of Holland," as he was called, was then at the height of his brilliant military career. He sat next to me at the table. But in spite of his obvious wish to make himself agreeable I found no pleasure in his society. Serious in his demeanour, cautious in his speech in spite of the frankness

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he affected, and much given to flattery, it was easily seen that his conduct was dictated by motives of policy. I felt that his politeness was insincere. Altogether he made a bad impression on me. I noticed especially that he was a heavy eater. The dinner was excellent. He helped himself more than once to several of the dishes, and drank in proportion, but without apparent consequences. But, after all, however slightly I was prepossessed with General Pichegru, I never should have suspected that behind that laurel-wreathed brow traitorous designs were then already hatching.

My attention was particularly attracted to General Moreau. There were two reasons because of which I was extremely desirous of making his acquaintance. First, there were the eulogies with which General Dessoles had more than once alluded to him in my presence; and then there was my cousin Maria's ardent praise of his bravery, his kindness, and other equally good qualities which are rarely found together. Without this very favourable account of General Moreau, I should no doubt never have distinguished him from among the other French generals, for his bearing and appearance were very simple indeed. Maria was so entirely wrapped up in General Moreau, her lovely eyes seemed so unceasingly fixed upon him, her ears seemed to drink in the least of his words with such avidity, that certain suspicions I had harboured, which at first had been vague, now developed into certainty. I was deeply grieved to see what danger my cousin was plunging into, remembering that it was much in the same manner that I had gone astray. At a later time I was able to recognize and appreciate all of Moreau's fine traits of character. In the meanwhile I took occasion, one day, to say to my cousin, about whose infatuation for the general I was becoming more and more concerned,

"It looks to me as though your attachment for General

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Moreau were of a tenderer kind than ordinary friendship. Could any other sentiment have——?"

"Yes," said she, proudly throwing back her head, "he has all my love, and will have it as long as I live."

Although not unprepared for such an answer, I was amazed at the impassioned tone in which it was given. And even when Maria spoke again in the quiet, charming way which so endeared her to everyone, it was only to extol the man of her choice.

Taken aback at the depth of her passion for him, I did not venture to examine her any further. I did not dare to ask her as to how far Moreau was aware of her love. But from the conversation which followed between us I gathered that I should be justified in giving free rein to my worst apprehensions. It was then that I became seized with a strong desire to rescue my young cousin from an infatuation which sooner or later must bring the direst consequences upon her. I therefore resolved to take the initiative myself on behalf of the imprudent girl.

One day a party from my uncle's house took a ride on horseback in the surrounding country. Moreau was one of us. An opportunity to talk with him readily presented itself. When we were far enough away from the others to insure our not being overheard, I made so bold as to inform him openly that I knew how matters stood between him and Maria.

"Maria," I went on, "has no pretensions to becoming your wife, but her name and station would prevent her from consenting to any other relation. You will recognize, General, that she is entitled to your respect. Nor would you, by continuing this illicit connection, make her imperil her reputation. You ought therefore to think of a pretext for leaving the country, so that my cousin's peace of mind may be restored."

Moreau answered in accents which I shall never forget.

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He avowed that his connection with Maria caused him deep remorse. He moreover declared his readiness to make reparation by asking for her hand in marriage. If he was not accepted, he would go away at once, and would ask for another command, in order to rid her of his presence who had suffered so much on his account.

Moreau's words were those of an honest man, desirous of making amends for an error committed upon mere impulse. From that time on I gave him my full regard. The result was what I had expected. Maria refused the General's honourable offer. Moreau left the next day. Maria was in despair; she said that she could never love again. She came to me for consolation, and we wept together.

After the departure of General Moreau, Pichegru favoured me with very marked attentions, which I naturally ascribed to motives in no way bearing on State politics. General Pichegru was not wanting in a certain capacity for affability when he believed it in his interest to show it. One morning, as I was engaged in writing to van M——, who was at Bommel with General Mcreau, a visit was announced from General Pichegru. I ordered him to be admitted. He was supposed to have a small opinion of women, and was said to be exclusively taken up with political interests and schemes of personal ambition. In spite of my prejudices against him, my vanity was naturally somewhat flattered at the insistence with which he sought me out at all occasions. Deception was lying in wait for my coquettish instincts. Pichegru was really a very clever man. He proved it in this instance in going straight to the point he had in view. But in spite of his astuteness I was not long in discovering that he had his eye upon me to serve him in a little political intrigue. My woman's cleverness was a match for his. I pretended not to understand his object, and the general was obliged to go without the help he

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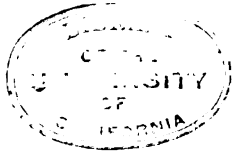
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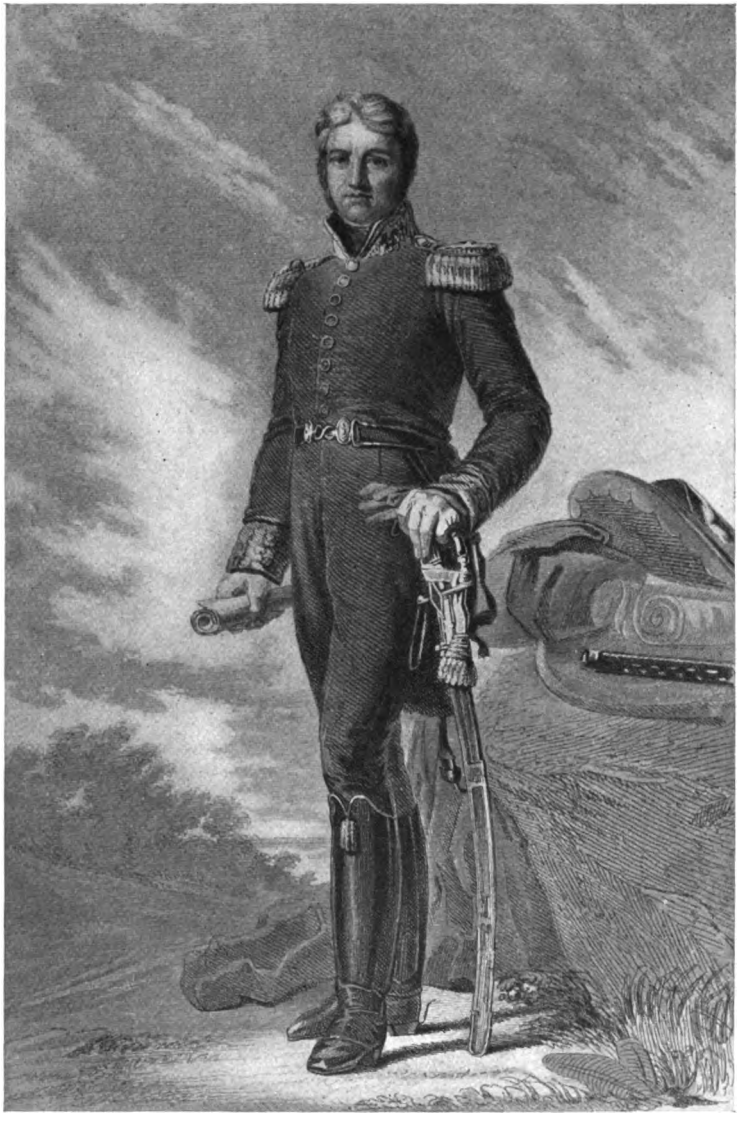

GENERAL VICTOR MOREAU
(*From a Painting at Versailles*)

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had expected to get from me. I have no unpleasant recollections of this episode. But the case must have been different with Pichegru, who never forgave me for having seen through his game. His conduct towards me suddenly changed altogether, his language becoming defiant and almost offensive.

Beside Pichegru's reputation as a soldier, that of Moreau was rapidly growing up. To the capabilities he had for some years been exhibiting was added a disinterestedness rare to behold among officers of a conquering army. Never was he known to accept the presents that every town was accustomed to offer to a victorious general. His name for integrity was so well established that Dutchmen came to consult him about their private affairs. Alas! Why did he not fall on the field of battle in Holland, in Germany, or in Italy, in the midst of the valiant Frenchmen he so often led to glory! Why was his death not worthy of a life that once promised so well! How true is the reflection of the poet of old: "Those whom the gods love die young."

The evening of our arrival at Utrecht there was a supper at the commander-in-chief's, to which van M—— was invited. I went with him. It was there that I heard the name of Ney for the first time—a name that was to be so closely associated with my future fate. Colonel Meynier had just received news from one of his friends who was serving with the army of the Rhine. The colonel read out the letter aloud at the end of supper. It announced that Kléber had appointed Ney his general adjutant. This promotion had followed upon a gallant exploit described in the letter. The news created marked pleasure among the officers present, who, having known Ney when he was with the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, had the highest opinion of his bravery and military abilities.

I scarcely can say what the nature of my feelings was

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during this supper. Sitting silent and inwardly agitated, I internally shared in the general enthusiasm, without being acquainted with the man who was its object. It was not the hero of a novel who was thus enchanting my imagination. It was a person who really existed, and who was called Michael Ney. The name was engraved upon my mind in indelible letters. Late at night I was still thinking of the flattering account I had heard of this Republican general.

We left Utrecht so suddenly that I barely had time to bid Colonel Meynier farewell and to assure him of my good will. I took the opportunity, however, to make some inquiries about Ney. He promised to convey to his friend the sentiments of esteem which I entertained for him. We had scarcely arrived upon our estate near Amsterdam, when van M—— was obliged to absent himself again. He went away with two friends, and I was left alone for a week.

I was living in security and happiness, and, young as I was, was rejoicing in my fine position in society, when something happened which changed the cause of my existence forever, which threw me off the smooth, beaten track of life which seemed to be my destiny.

My husband had been back for three weeks. I was alone one day in my room when a box was brought to me which had just arrived by a messenger. I paled at the sight of the writing of the address. A trembling hand had traced a few thin lines, in which I recognized the hand of Marescot. A violent emotion seized me, and I made up my mind that this package must contain the last farewell, or perhaps a last love-token from the man whose memory, though it had for a time been effaced, had always survived at the bottom of my heart.

"He is wounded; perhaps he is dead!" I thought, and fell upon the floor in a faint.

When I came to I was in the arms of my husband,

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who was lavishing the tenderest care and the gentlest caresses upon me. I tore myself from his arms and fell at his feet, exclaiming:

"Oh! leave me, I am unfit to be your wife! Do not let my unhappy mother know of my shame!"

My husband raised me up kindly, and pressed me to his bosom. There was nothing left for him to know. A bracelet and a letter contained in the box he had opened had told the whole story. But being of a philosophical turn of mind, he readily pardoned me.

"My poor friend," said he, "we must observe entire secrecy about this sad business. I am as guilty as you are; your mother had warned me of your danger, but I did not listen to her. She and the rest of the world must be kept in ignorance of what has happened. As for me, I must accuse myself of not having watched your innocent youth carefully enough. Forgive me for it! You will always find me the most faithful and indulgent of friends."

But these kind words remained ineffectual. Indeed, they only tended to deepen my remorse. My husband supposed my alienation from virtue to be but temporary, but I felt hopelessly wicked. I was dumb before his repeated demonstrations of affection. If I no longer was actually in love with him whose want of caution had exposed me, I still was unable to blot his memory out of my heart.

In the evening I was in a worse state of mind than ever. My husband came to see me again, and in order to overcome my unresponsiveness and my savage silence he lavished endearments and caresses upon me. Of a sudden I began to hate him. I could not forgive van M—— for overlooking a fault so quickly which ought at least to have made him show a melancholy reserve, if not stern indifference. No doubt I was unjust, but it seemed to me that he was degrading me to the place of

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a mistress by betokening emotions which could not have been based on respect.

This idea continued to ferment in my brain, and so took possession of me, that I decided to leave my husband, even if the resolve should bring upon me the forfeiture of my advantages of birth and of my fortune. My fervid imagination and the independence of my character would not allow me to pretend sentiments any longer which were not really mine. I determined that I would henceforth live alone, so as not to be obliged to accept the coin of an affection I was unable to return. My marriage portion, which my husband had never consented to touch, was sixty thousand florins. The laces and jewellery my mother had given me on my wedding day were worth about one hundred and thirty thousand florins. I decided to take away with me only as much as I could consider my personal property, which included a thousand ducats in cash that I owed to my mother's generosity. I gave up the luxuries of my married life without repining, and made up my mind to keep none of the presents I had received from my husband since the beginning of our union.

My husband left the next day for Amsterdam, where he was to attend two political meetings. He spent several days there. I did not lose a moment in making preparations for departure. I put my diamonds and my laces in a handbag, as well as the thousand ducats in gold. I then filled a trunk with linen and other clothes, and sent it to Utrecht to the Hôtel du Mail, with a letter to the proprietor announcing my impending arrival. The same day I left my house at nightfall by the garden gate, where a postchaise was waiting for me. Before quitting forever the conjugal roof under which I had enjoyed universal respect and esteem, I wrote my husband a complete confession of my wrongs, at the same time renouncing all claims upon him. I also asked

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him not to make any endeavours to find me. My plan was to spend some time in Paris, living there under an assumed name, and devoting myself to study and the arts. In the letter I informed him of my intention of going alone. I was to have no one for a companion, I said, and did not propose to go to the house of any friend. I purposed to gain my own livelihood, so as to live a free, if obscure, existence. I also wrote my mother an avowal of my error, and begged her pardon for the pain I was causing her, adding that, being unworthy of taking refuge with her, I was going abroad. But I said that I loved her still, and that I would send her news from my new place of residence.

To-day, in surveying the past, and in reflecting upon that occurrence which was the turning point in my career, I must sorrowfully acknowledge that I ought not so hastily to have taken such a serious step. But, being young and inexperienced, I was the victim of the violence of my passions. The die was cast!

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UTRECHT
(Facsimile of a London Print Published in 1825)

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CHAPTER III

ARRIVAL IN UTRECHT — INTERVIEW WITH GROUCHY — AND WITH MOREAU — INTIMACY WITH MOREAU BEGINS — HIS SIMPLICITY AND SENSE OF JUSTICE — CAMPAIGNING IN MEN'S CLOTHES ONCE MORE — PICHEGRU'S TREACHERY — IN PARIS WITH MOREAU — A HOUSE PURCHASED IN PASSY — COLLISION WITH MME. TALLIEN'S CARRIAGE—VISITS TO MME. TALLIEN AND DRIVES WITH HER.

By the time I had reached the Hôtel du Mail at Utrecht the next day, I had succeeded in persuading myself that my flight had been necessary. It was true that in leaving my husband I sacrificed my reputation, but at the same time I was ensuring his peace and my own happiness.

Nobody in Utrecht was surprised to see me appear without van M——. Everybody knew how much liberty we were accustomed to allow one another. Besides, I was dressed in men's clothes. I had put them on for the first time in the campaign of 1792, and since that time I had often worn them when I travelled.

After my departure my husband's family had insited upon my being followed so that I might be brought back and locked up. To this my mother willingly agreed. Van M——, however, declared that he would never consent to such a plan, and that neither would he entertain the notion of a divorce. Far from trying to

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irritate me by taking strong measures, he on the contrary made every effort to persuade me by gentle means. He had in his hands the written statement of my fault. He might have made use of it. His family was for a long time ignorant of the fact that he owned such an important document. My flight from him was the only grievance that, so far as any one else knew, could be brought against me. As soon as van M—— had become apprised of my disappearance, he had gone direct to Paris in the hope of finding me there. He did not think I should stop at Utrecht.

The first thing I did upon arriving there was to write to General Grouchy, who was then absent from town. Colonel Meynier, as soon as he learned that I was in Utrecht, made haste to come to see me. He seemed painfully affected upon hearing what events had caused my presence in Utrecht and what resolution I had taken. With all the straightforwardness of a brave soldier and an honourable man, he gave me the only advice which sound reason could dictate. Without sparing my feelings very much he explained what sad things the future had in store for me. For several days he remonstrated with me, but, finally seeing that my mind was fully made up, ceased from referring to the subject.

I comforted myself with the thought that nobody would ever be able to accuse me of making use of the fortune of the man whose love and confidence I had betrayed. When van M—— died, a few years later, at Demerara, in Dutch Guiana, I learnt that his will contained several clauses in my favour. It merely remained for me to avail myself of them. But I abstained from claiming the property from his family, and did not touch his legacy. I had been in Utrecht a week when General Grouchy came back from a tour upon which he had been accompanied by Mme. Lin——. This handsome

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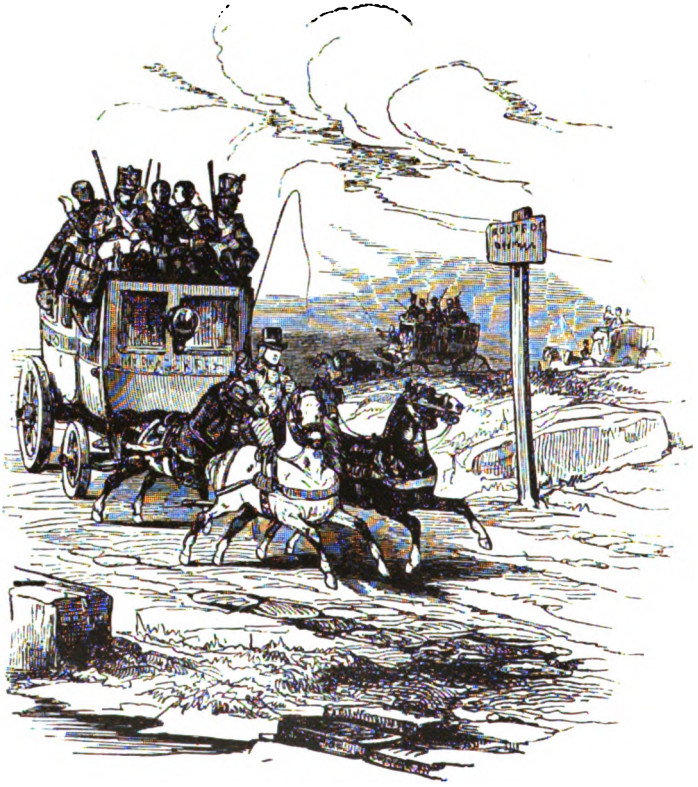

STAGE COACH OF THE NAPOLEONIC ERA.

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woman exhibited absolute indifference to public opinion. She had not, like myself, deserted her husband. But she was none the better for that. Grouchy came to see me. He seemed sorry to find me in such a position. I asked him as to the whereabouts of Moreau. Being told that he was at Menin, I requested Grouchy to send him a letter in which I proposed to ask for protection against my husband's relatives. Grouchy consented, and had my letter transmitted to the general.

No sooner was I alone, than I was seized with a vague fear. I resolved to follow my letter at once, or rather to anticipate it. It was then eleven o'clock in the morning. I gave an order for a postchaise. Colonel Meynier offered to escort me, and went to ask his commanding officer for leave of absence. While he was gone I wrote a letter to my mother. I then made my preparations very quickly and by half past three we were on the road with a maid and a man servant whom I had engaged in Utrecht. A few hours' journey from Menin Colonel Meynier left me. As soon as I was established at the hotel at Menin I announced my arrival to General Moreau in a brief note requesting him to call. He came directly after dinner. He expressed sincere gratification at meeting me, but his pleasure gave way to painful surprise when he found out why I was in Menin and why I was obliged to ask for his protection.

"I can hardly," he said, "tell you how anxious I feel. But I should feel ashamed to think that one of our officers had been the cause of your doing anything so fatally imprudent."

"General," I answered, "I came *alone* to ask for your protection!"

"And it shall not be withheld, I assure you. But I beseech you not to throw everything to the winds. Write to your husband—write to him, I beg of you!"

Moved to tears by his language, I allowed a part of

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my secret to escape. I acknowledged my guilt in such good faith and in such a repentant tone that no upright man could have doubted my sincerity. I attributed the wrong I had done my husband to an invincible power within me. Moreau made no further attempt to change my fixed attitude of mind. He at once became my friend and loyal protector. Proud and happy at having won him over, I confided my plans for the future to him. I renewed the assurances of my reliance upon his steadfast character, and strongly expressed the hope that he would not forsake me.

General Moreau was not given to gallantry. The woman he was fondest of in all the world could never have made a coxcomb of him. But he was a sure and devoted friend to those whom he liked. Towards strangers or people he rarely saw, Moreau was cold and reserved. In moments of intimacy he showed much charm, and his conversation betrayed a cultivated mind, entirely devoid of affectation. He came to call upon me every day. I told him what I had seen on the battlefield at such an early age. He, on the other hand, talked to me of his rivals for fame. The names of Hoche, Dumouriez, Dampierre, and Marceau frequently had a place in our conversations. He appraised the military talent of the first at its just value. The personal character of the second repelled him, but did not prevent him from otherwise giving him full credit of his deserts. The other two he thought were in every way worthy of their reputation. Moreau was above all concerned for the renown of his country. A republican by nature, and this in the severest sense of the word, he was as plain in his manner and dress as he was in his tastes.

I was burning to go to Paris. I wished to lead a retired life and to devote my time to study and the arts. One morning, therefore, I made up my mind to ask Moreau for a letter of introduction to one of his friends

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in Paris, which would facilitate my establishing myself in that city. But the general soon came in to inform me that he had been ordered to Kehl to take command of the army in lieu of General Pichegru. Without ever having accounted to myself for it, I found that my lot was cast in with Moreau. I had been unable to resist the expressions of devotion and affection he had lavished upon me since my arrival in Menin. I was proud of having exclusively inspired such a man with such sentiments. So I did not refuse to go with him. I was again to find myself in the camps of war. This adventurous existence pleased my imagination, and the journey, although it might entail some dangers, was nothing to me but a little excursion. Moreau naturally mentioned Pichegru's name. He professed a sincere friendship for that general. As for me, I could not conceal the antipathy I had conceived for him after the interview at Bois-le-Duc.

"Surely you are too high-minded," said Moreau, "to judge a man like Pichegru so lightly. You are also too generous to persist in entertaining prejudices about him which I believe to be ill-founded. Perhaps some day I shall be able to justify him entirely in your eyes. But for the moment we need not speak of him. At Kehl you will see some fine generals: Saint-Cyr, Lecourbe, and Sainte-Suzanne, whom you already know, and young Delmas, whom you have not yet seen. May none of these brave officers steal your affections from me! Admire my friends as much as you like, only love no one but me!"

My answer was a look and a smile which made him happy.

The next day, dressed as a man, with blue coat and black necktie, I was ready at five o'clock in the morning for our departure. Moreau appeared to be charmed with his travelling companion. We drove in a calash,

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which was followed by a waggon containing our luggage. I will not pretend to relate here the splendid feats of arms I witnessed during my sojourn on the banks of the Rhine. Their glorious results were made very plain to France. I had my share of the privations and fatigues of a campaign. I was at headquarters for some length of time. Occasionally it happened that for two or three days I could neither change my clothes nor take off my boots, while I slept on the ground and ate the coarse bread of the soldiers. It was at this time that I caught a glimpse of General Ney, on horseback at the head of a column of men. I was struck by his proud bearing. But I only discovered who he was after he had gone by.

When I began to feel the need of rest, I asked Moreau that my departure for Paris be postponed no longer. He assented, and allowed his body-servant to accompany me. Besides, I was protected by an escort as long as I was near the theatre of war. The general sent me to Mme. Duf—— in the Rue Saint-Dominique with a solicitous letter of introduction, recommending me to her kindness. I promised Moreau to live in the greatest privacy until such time as he should join me.

For several months, then, I had led a solitary existence, which I must say I found a very agreeable one, when I received a letter from Moreau, from which I extract the following:

"Alas! dear friend, you showed more perspicacity than the rest of us! For at this very moment I am about to acquaint the Directory with some very grave facts concerning General Pichegru. You shall soon be acquainted with the details of this painful affair. In a few days I shall be in Paris."

At the beginning of the campaign some light troops had captured a van belonging to the baggage train of an Austrian general. In a strong-box which was remitted to Moreau he found a number of letters, some of which

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were in cipher. It took a long time to make out their contents, this important task being confided to Generals Desaix and Régnier, of the general staff. Proof was apparent that secret intelligence existed between General Pichegru and the exiled nobility and the princes of the house of Bourbon.

Thus I was to see General Moreau once more. This hope filled me with joy. However, my sentiment toward Moreau was not that of love. It was rather admiration, respect, and gratitude for his handsome behaviour towards me. Nevertheless, I shed tears when he arrived. He seemed satisfied with the account I gave him of my mode of living since our separation. He took up his abode in his house at Chaillot.

I asked Moreau to find me a house at Passy or Auteuil, in order that I might be near him. In that way we should in some sort be neighbours. We should only go to Paris for the sake of the theatres. He would be able to pay me daily visits. This idea seemed to please him. But several days went by without his referring to the subject again. Only, I observed signs of intelligence between the general and my maid; there was a great amount of coming and going; mystery was printed on all faces; messages were sent and received, as to the purport of which I was wholly in the dark; in fact, I felt that there must be a surprise in the air. Certainly, I was far from expecting that which was actually preparing.

Moreau, once entrusted with the destiny of his country, rewarded by no other prize for his brilliant services than unmerited reproach, sought oblivion of the profound injustice done him in his love for me. He was, as I have already stated, the last person to indulge in petty gallantries. But through his inborn instincts of generosity he showed me the delicate attentions which were my constant delight, and which increased my regard for him day by day.

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One morning the general asked me to look at some apartments with him in Passy. To this I acceded, and he took me to the main road of that place. There he entered a charming house, comfortably furnished, and fitted out with the most perfect taste. A lovely garden was annexed to the house, and at the bottom of it there stood a pavilion containing—like my pavilion in Paris—a small livery and several cupboards ornamented with mirrors and paintings. This aroused my warmest approbation.

"Oh, general!" I exclaimed, "how I should like to live in such a place!"

"Well, if you are so pleased with this house, of course you must stay in it."

"But, is it to be let now?"

"No, my dear friend—not unless you want to cancel your proprietorship. You are in your own house."

"My own house! General, you must not think of such a thing! My means do not yet allow me such a luxurious apartment. I must be economical."

Moreau easily seized an opportunity of making me accept a present—in the shape of a loan, as he put it. He told me that when my mother should have come to different views, I should then no longer need to draw upon my friends. In the meanwhile he wished to act as my banker, or my mother's, if I liked that better. I hoped soon to be able to refund Moreau the money he had disbursed for me in the purchase of this house, which henceforth I looked upon as my own. So that I at once proceeded to occupy it without any sense of committing an indiscretion.

Moreau was now everthing in the world to me. He was my only friend and my only protector. He put his influence over me to good purpose in obliging me to seek distractions which would relieve me from the melancholy that often oppressed me. Therefore, to please

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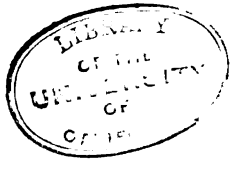

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MADAME TALLIEN
(From an Engraving by Leguay)

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him, I consented not to shut myself up altogether, although I persisted in declining to see visitors. He would usually come for me of a morning, and we would take long walks together. When he was unable to come, I went out on horseback or in a carriage, as he wished me to. In the evening we would go to the play together, or sometimes I would go alone, and Moreau would join me there. Theatrical performances had always been my favourite amusement, and now were the only pastime which entirely absorbed my mind and made me forget bygone days.

One day Moreau came to tell me that he would be obliged to make a short journey. He begged me to attend, during his absence, the first performance of an opera composed by a countryman of his, for which he had engaged a box, and which was to be given the next day. He appeared to be much interested in the success of this opera, whose author he said was his friend and a man of great gifts and large heart. The principal part was to be taken by a favourite actor of the public, and, like Moreau, a son of Brittany. The actor's name was Elleviou, and the composer was Alexander Duval. So I went to see the new opera.

I was returning to Passy full of delightful reminiscences of the piece I had seen, when my carriage sustained a violent shock and at the same time a piercing cry struck my ear. I opened the door, and jumped to the ground, at the risk of being run over by the wheels of the vehicle which had collided with mine. It was Mme. Tallien's carriage which had run into mine at the opening of the Cours-la-Reine, breaking one of its axle-trees in consequence. I at once asked her if she was hurt, but fortunately she had escaped with nothing worse than a severe fright. I had often heard her beauty spoken of, but it was now plain to me that all accounts underestimated her looks. Mme. Tallien was grandly gowned. She was on her way

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to the Luxembourg to a ball given by Barras. I seemed to make good impression upon her. I offered her a seat in my carriage, and expressed my desire to take her to her destination, since her own carriage was disabled. She accepted my proposition with graciousness, and we drove off at once.

After thanking me cordially, Mme. Tallien asked me my name. I answered she would be none the wiser if she heard it, as I lived alone in the country and was a foreigner.

"A foreigner!" she exclaimed. "You are, I am sure, the Dutch lady whom General Moreau is hiding so carefully from everybody, and whom he brought to France after capturing."

I answered that I had voluntarily put myself under the protection of the general, who had been acquainted with my family. Mme. Tallien then very amiably made me promise to visit her. I left her at the Luxembourg.

Upon Moreau's return I told him of my adventure. He seemed put out at the inclination I evinced to respond to Mme. Tallien's civilities. He had never refused to acknowledge her good qualities and her personal charm. Indeed, in every conversation between us in which this handsome woman had figured, he had always rendered her justice. But he had a small opinion of the majority of her friends. In his eyes such society was not suitable for me. It cost him a great deal to oppose me for the first time, but the political intrigues in which Mme. Tallien allowed herself to be involved inspired him with a profound dislike for her. At last he yielded to my persuasions, urging me, however, to keep closely on my guard, and to acquaint him with everything that was said to me about him in her circle.

In order not to cause Moreau displeasure I ceased from mentioning Mme. Tallien's name to him. I merely

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availed myself of the permission he had given me to visit her. I saw as much of my new friend as I possibly could.

My time being less taken up than Mme. Tallien's, and I being by temperament more enthusiastic than she, who lived in the whirl of high society, I gave myself up to my affection for her with all the ardour of an imagination nurtured in Italy, putting no restraint upon my feelings. Mme. Tallien, on the other hand, immersed in pleasures and politics, absorbed in affairs of dress and of State, was very much calmer in her friendship, which yet showed qualities of depth and durability. As I always was notified in advance of the hour of Moreau's visits, I made use of every morning that he did not come to go to Mme. Tallien's. I generally left at an early hour, wearing my men's clothes.

Mme. Tallien lived at "The Cottage," a name she had given a straw-thatched house at the corner of an avenue near the quays and not far from the Champs-Elysées. The Marbeuf gardens were near her house. She was in the habit of receiving a great many guests, although she never gave balls. There was card-playing for high stakes, and there were dinners and suppers, but there was never any dancing. She gave orders to have me admitted to her room at any hour, without being previously announced. Very frequently I would get her out of bed, since she was not given to early rising. I would help her to dress, although she said I was very awkward at it, and then we would drive off in a cabriolet, with my groom on horseback in attendance. Sometimes we would drive over the new boulevards or in the Champ de Mars, or, again, we would take breakfast at the Mont-Parnasse "Dairy," which at that time was still a very rustic establishment. On these excursions her beautiful face shone with a keener enjoyment than was sometimes visible in it at the gorgeous festivities of the Luxembourg.

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CHAPTER IV

MOREAU APPOINTED INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF THE ARMY IN ITALY — THE "CONTEMPORARY" GOES WITH HIM TO MILAN — THE CASA FAGUANI — ENTHUSIASM OF MILANESE SOCIETY FOR "MADAME MOREAU" — THE NATURE OF HER REGARD FOR THE GENERAL — SPIES OF THE DIRECTORY — A DINING-ROOM COMEDY OF VENGEANCE — MOREAU'S DESIRE TO MARRY IDA — MOREAU AND NEY CONTRASTED — ALL WOMEN ORDERED TO LEAVE THE ARMY — MOREAU OFFERS TO RESIGN HIS CAREER — IDA MEETS OLD FRIENDS IN LYONS — MOREAU'S MILITARY SUCCESSES IN 1799.

Moreau fretted under the enforced idleness to which he was condemned under the Directory, which was rendered all the more unendurable by the spying to which he was subject, and of which he saw fresh proof every day. Yet the time was nearing when the utilization of General Moreau's military talents would once more become compulsory. The year 1799 opened disastrously in Italy, Moreau having foreseen that further reverses would fall upon the army. He wrote several letters in elucidation of his views to the minister of war. At the moment when he least expected it, the rank was assigned to him, in the month of April, of inspector-general, and he was ordered to attend the sittings of a commission oppointed by the government for the purpose of preparing a plan of campaign and devising defensive and

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offensive measures. At the office of the minister of war Moreau was fully informed of the strength and resources of the army of Italy. He did not hesitate to sacrifice his pride, and accepted the secondary post of inspector-general. This act of modesty was soon to redound to his fame. One day at seven o'clock in the morning he came to me to tell me of his nomination, and asked me if I would consent to accompany him, and whether I could do so without regret. I replied that I would be ready the next morning. He thanked me affectionately. I lost no time in making my preparations for the journey.

Next day, at six o'clock, as I had promised Moreau, I was ready to go. We started in a carriage. The journey seemed very short to me. Time never hung heavily when I was with Moreau. He had a special capacity for analyzing and describing human character, which capacity he was very fond of indulging. Besides, he was gifted with the art of story-telling. His memory was well stocked with anecdotes, and his conversation was very varied. All along the road he gave me particulars about the people then occupying the most important posts in the army in Italy. He had more than once spoken to me of Bernadotte, and often reverted to him. Later events showed that he estimated him rightly.

"Bernadotte," said he, "harbours an ambition which will ruin him if it does not raise him above everybody else."

We travelled, it is true, at a great rate, but scarcely fast enough to satisfy my impatience.

Arriving at Milan at midnight, we spent the next two days in the strictest incognito at the Hotel Pelican, where Moreau had taken quarters. When once the official lodging of the inspector-general had been selected, we went to live at the Casa Faguani, in the Via San-Pietro. This mansion belonged to the Countess Faguani, whose name it bore. The lady in question had no love

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(*Engraved by Portman*)

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for the conquerors of her country. She therefore had withdrawn to the country, and had left her majordomo, with two or three servants, to receive and take care of us. The rooms were very fine and large, and adorned with handsome paintings and magnificent pieces of sculpture. But chairs and tables of the meanest quality had been substituted everywhere for the sumptuous furniture which usually filled the house. Mirrors, clocks, hangings, antique vases—all had disappeared. The majordomo, surprised at seeing the general accompanied by a fashionable young woman,—for I had put aside my men's clothes before going to the Faguani mansion,—proposed to fit out anew the apartment that I was to inhabit. I thanked him cordially for his kind intentions, but refused. Moreau was grateful to me for not showing myself more exacting. But when Signor Patrizzio heard me speak to him in the purest Italian, nothing in the world could prevent him from once more putting back everything ornamental belonging to the sitting-room, the bedroom, the dressing-room, and the bath-room allotted to me. As if by magic pink and white damask hung in long folds before the windows and over the gilded wainscoting of my apartment. The opulence and the good taste of the countess was made manifest at every hand.

Patrizzio was a queer individual, but at the same time a good fellow in every sense of the word. Violently prejudiced against the French, nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to see us deprived of everything, had it not been for my Italian speech and manner, which speedily won me his good graces. He insisted upon showering compliments upon me, and called me *mia garbatissima padroncina.* He also made his niece serve me as a maid.

The first evening that we were established in our new home, the general said to me:

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"My dear friend, you must know that I wish you to have a suitable position in this country, and with it the consideration that I always want to be paid you. I, therefore, must tell you that from this day forth you are to be Madame Moreau for everybody. You will take this name, will you not?"

These words made a painful impression upon me. For it seemed to me that in taking the general's name I should for a second time be abandoning the name which I bore by right of a legitimate union. I was averse to publicly outraging my husband in this manner, whom I had already so cruelly afflicted. Moreau mistook the motive of my hesitation in answering.

"My dear friend," he said, "this idea seems to displease you."

I threw myself weeping into his arms, and confessed my scruples to him. With rare tenderness and delicacy the general pacified my feelings and quieted my conscience.

The day after this we began to be visited by the authorities. I was very much flattered by the civilities proffered me as the wife of General Moreau. Invitations poured in upon us from all sides. A dressmaker in Milan, Mme. Rivière, was summoned to the Casa Faguani, and charged with the highly important task of making me a splendid gown for the dinner that was soon to be given by the Cis-Alpine Directory. This time Moreau himself took an active interest in my dress. Thanks to him it was most fashionable and tasteful. My good figure, my fresh complexion, and my fair hair on the day after the Directory's dinner called forth a quantity of poems, which were sent to me printed on satin in letters of gold. The wildest enthusiasms for me prevailed when, after talking with me for over two hours, the celebrated Monti declared that I knew all the Italian poets as well as himself. All the guests sang the praises of *il dotto*

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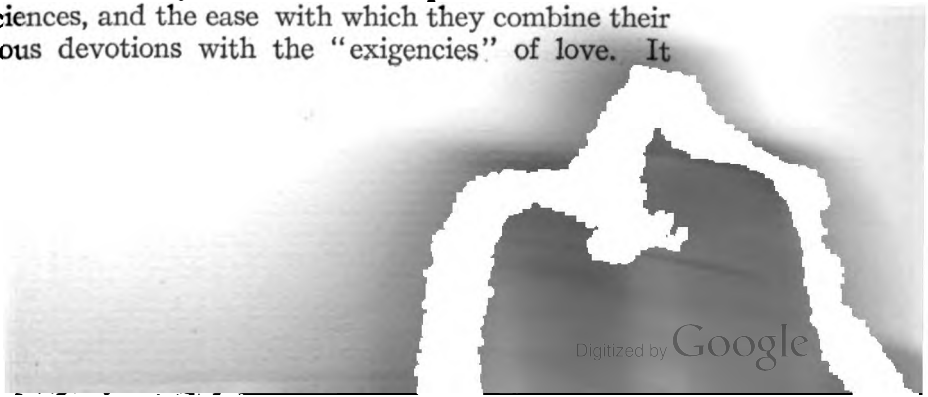
sapere, le grazie ivezzi della bellissima cittadina Moreau. When I appeared as an amazon on horseback, *al corso orientale*, I attracted a universal attention which I could not but attribute to my success of the night before.

Common sense at first preserved me from the intoxication in which such social triumphs might have plunged me. But soon I set no limit to my expenditure. Mme. Rivière's thirty work-women were all kept busy at my dresses alone. Moreau left not a single wish of mine unfulfilled. The time came when I was referred to less for my good looks than for my extravagance and luxurious habits. If the men envied Moreau, the women envied my fashionable gowns, and my jewellery. In consequence of my triumphs I of course made a number of enemies. Yet in the midst of all the festivities and the whirl of pleasures, I was gnawed by a malady hitherto unknown to me: I was tired of it all.

With a few exceptions the bringing up of Italian women is very deficient. The moral side of their education is greatly neglected. They are taught a few ornamental accomplishments. From childhood up they indulge in habits of idleness. The baths they take every day, and the time they bestow on dressing their hair, and the attending to their toilet—all this takes up three-quarters of their life. They sleep a great deal in the day time, and at night they go to balls and the opera to show off their beauty and their clothes. They emerge from the vortex of worldliness to hasten to the confessional, whence they fly back to new pleasures. There are very few of them who know what true religion is, that is to say the religion which dwells in the heart. The piety of nearly all of them consists in the scrupulous observance of outward ceremonies. Nothing is stranger than the way in which they are able to compromise with their consciences, and the ease with which they combine their religious devotions with the "exigencies" of love. It



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was particularly after my second journey to Italy that I was able to see through the scandalous indulgence of confessors for their penitents in everything pertaining to the department of gallantry. The abundance of alms which I distributed among the poor, the large sums I contributed whenever it was a case of answering a call for the fitting out of a chapel, and finally the gold-piece with which I never failed to pay for the benediction of our house, brought it about that I was considered a good Catholic, seeking expiation for sin through deeds most meritorious in the sight of God—deeds of charity.

Never did I abuse Moreau's deep love for me for the purpose of furthering my personal interests. It was a passion of which I was truly proud. Other men than Moreau have inspired me with love more fervent. But I had never felt a more profound regard and a more real respect for anybody. He was so kind and so genuinely sympathetic when we were alone together. Moreau was always pleased when, early in the morning, between six and seven, I sent word to him by my maid that I was awake, and that I should like to see him in my room. This was the time for that intimate talk which is so full of charm for two souls that thoroughly understand each other. We then could talk quite freely without any secrets between us. Was he depressed by some serious annoyance? My natural gaiety was not long in bringing him back to a more cheerful state of mind. Was he irritated because of long waiting, or because of the news of some injustice done him on the part of the Directory? I soon banished such painful thoughts by recurring to reminiscences of his renown. I spoke to him of his feats of arms and of the services he had rendered his country. This never failed to evoke a smile from him and a return to good humour.

Things were looking darker every day in Italy. Messengers and despatches were constantly arriving from

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the army and the Directory. The general, without ever initiating me into his military secrets, could not, nevertheless, help showing grief or dissatisfaction when he was with me according as the news he had received was good or bad. I contented myself with the small confidences he saw fit to make me, without ever taking the liberty fo asking him questions. One evening, however, I observed that he was so anxious and disturbed that I ventured to ask him the reason of it:

"You will not, I am sure, ascribe my questioning you to idle curiosity, but will know that I want to share in your troubles."

From a few remarks which escaped him I understood that recent despatches from the Directory tried to make him conclude arrangements with certain army contractors which would have been extremely disadvantageous to our soldiers.

"And meanwhile I can do nothing to stop such shameful transactions!" he indignantly exclaimed. "The wretches! They are rolling in luxury at the expense of the country, and as for the soldier who is to die for his country they deny him his due. Yet they have the temerity to find fault with me because I am severe towards the contractors!"

Through a very strange combination of moral traits, persistency—or obstinacy, whichever it might have been—existed in Moreau side by side with great vacillation. This is the only defect I ever discovered in his fine, noble character. In preparation of a plan of campaign, and on the battlefield, Moreau exhibited all the will-power and energy which forsook him as soon as he approached political affairs.

An agent of the Directory whom I had sometimes seen in Paris at Mme. Tallien's was then in Milan, entrusted with a mission to the Cis-Alpine Directory. He was one of General Moreau's principal enemies, the general, in

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fact, having warned me to be on my guard against him. This creature, a short time before my departure for Italy, had had the impudence to offer me a large sum of money to reveal secrets that did not belong to me, and with which, moreover, I was not in the least familiar. In concert with another "honest" spy he returned twice to the charge in order to buy a letter I was to write, stating that at Bois-le-Duc, and during the whole of the Dutch campaign, a secret agreement was forming between Moreau and Pichegru for betraying France. I need not say with what anger and contempt I rejected these infamous offers, which I never mentioned to Moreau. I was obliged, nevertheless, for several days to treat the wretched spy politely, who did not venture to renew his attempts at bribery. Moreau, who had been approached in a similar way by spies of the Directory, of course likewise treated their machinations with utter contempt.

The day after the conversation I have just quoted, we were to go to a grand dinner given by the Count Orosco, the Spanish ambassador, but Moreau told me that I should be obliged to go alone. He gave me the sort of injunctions which a husband gives his wife when she goes into society without him. I promised to behave with dignity. At bottom I did not expect to enjoy myself much at the dinner. It, however, turned out to be much more amusing than I had hoped for.

From earliest childhood I had been accustomed to being told how good-looking I was. I believed the statement with perfectly good faith, without attaching particular importance to my natural advantages. While I was flattered because of my beauty, compliments were paid me—which were no doubt very exaggerated—about my wit, and this, it is true, made me feel somewhat vain. But in my vanity there was nothing offensive to other women. I was really a good sort of soul. Still, if I was

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not disagreeable, I knew how to defend myself against attack from one of my own sex. The dinner at the Spanish embassy, which I have just mentioned, gave rise to an episode of this kind.

The ambassador's wife, Countess Orosco, was very ugly, for which reason she was very jealous of many other women, and of myself in particular. Besides this, she was proud of her literary accomplishments, and too conceited to admit that in this respect I could possibly have the least advantage over her. I willingly could forgive the countess as far as my face was concerned, but not her small opinion of my mental faculties. So I resolved to revenge myself signally upon her at this very dinner. I did it in a very simple way. I flirted vigorously with my neighbour at the table, General Lebel, who had the reputation of being one of the handsomest men in the army, but who was rather stupid. My friend the ambassadress, it was rumored, had succeeded in harnessing the general to her chariot.

Although Moreau was never considered a jealous man, and certainly never deserved to be thought so, his almost constant attendance upon me in the drawing-rooms of Milan, and our evident pleasure in each other's company, frightened away the bright butterflies who might have desired to flit about me. But that evening I was not under the eye of my *Argus*, as my admirers called Moreau, and I treated the ambassadress with exemplary cruelty all through the dinner and afterwards.

Carried away by the amiability I displayed towards him, General Lebel, whose cardinal virtue was not constancy, very quickly loaded himself with guilt in the eyes of the lady who was so much interested in him. Under the pretext of talking to me about General Moreau he clung to my heels in spite of the furious glances shot at him by the countess. He was doubly mistaken in his breach of faith, since it did not in the least ingratiate

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him with me. He took all my smiles for genuine currency. He refused to leave me for an instant the whole evening, and had neither a word nor a look for the lady of his heart, who was in a terrible rage, and who was only restrained in the bounds of propriety by her bringing up. Internally she wished me at the devil.

There was no sequel to this dinner-party. But I never have been able to think without laughing of the probable scene which took place afterwards between her ladyship, the Spanish ambassadress, and her flighty admirer.

Moreau, to whom I related the whole story, gravely censured my conduct, adding that through such light and thoughtless behaviour I had laid myself open to criticism, which was always ready to assail a young and pretty woman like myself. I pretended to agree with Moreau's view. But secretly I was quite delighted with my little feminine revenge. Moreau's character was strongly tinged with austere republican principles of morality. He was a man of extreme delicacy of sentiment. This delicacy would undoubtedly have disapproved of the illicit tie which bound us together, if he had not long entertained the wish and intention to sanctify our relation by a religious ceremony as soon as circumstances would allow. I repeat that I never was really in love with this general. What I felt for him was rather respect than love. With him I knew no more than the shadow of that great passion that was to possess me in mature womanhood and fill the rest of my life. It was left to another man to inspire me with that passion which inflicts so many and such deep torments, and brings so few moments of happiness. My connection with Ney in no way resembled that between myself and Moreau. When Moreau first met me, my conduct was still clean as far as the public was concerned. I was besieged by admirers who lauded my beauty, which

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many of them declared was perfect. I mingled freely with society. And when, soon after, I besought Moreau's friendship, so little time had elapsed since the day when I could claim to deserve full consideration, that his love for me was necessarily respectful. I was only sixteen when I put myself in his hands. My youth and inexperience would, in any case, have urged such a just man to make all possible allowances for me. I always looked upon him more as my protector than my lover.

Ney's character was as fiery as Moreau's was moderate and calm. But quite apart from this difference between these two remarkable men, I was far from being able to inspire Ney with the same interest as Moreau when events finally brought us together. I had not only forfeited my right to public regard, from which I had fallen as belonging to the category of women whose beauty is their only merit and fortune, but I had also the insinuations about me to overcome which had been poured into his ears. Besides, Ney was all along aware of the sentiments I had cherished towards him, and nothing, probably, could have prepossessed him less in my favour than the infatuation that had siezed me on his account. I was a few years older then. Moreau had tried to make an accomplished woman of me. He not only wanted me to show superiority to other women by my personal graces, but also through the cultivation of my mind. Ney, whose habits and tastes were so entirely at variance from those of Moreau, encouraged me to think very lightly of my feminine graces, and even to share in the risks and adventures of the stronger sex. The facts I shall relate further on about my military career will make plain how opposite the feelings were which attached me to those two great captains, and how different were the emotions which I excited in them.

The day following the dinner at the Spanish ambassador's, Moreau was the recipient of fresh despatches. I

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was sure, from his perturbation, that their tenor must be far from satisfactory. He was irritated to the last degree by the stupidity of the Directory, which left the army in Italy in the dangerous dilemma brought about it by the incapacity of its commander. He seemed to grow more and more anxious, and that day he spent a greater part of the morning in my apartments. He there answered the various despatches which continued to come in. As we had invited some people to dinner, he left me to attend to his toilet, and shut himself up in his study.

He only reappeared at dinner time, in a darker mood and more taciturn than ever. I did not contrive to speak to him until the end of the meal, when coffee was being handed round. He asked me to cut the affair short, because he wanted to be alone with me, whereupon he withdrew. So, without infringing against the rules of politeness, I managed to empty my drawing-room two hours earlier than I usually would have done. I took advantage of my first moment of liberty to hasten to Moreau's study, where I found him at work. He informed me that he had just then received a second order to have all women removed from the army, and, in fact, showed me the written document from the Directory to that effect. But it had apparently not yet occurred to the authorities in Paris to confide the post of commander-in-chief of the army to him.

I protested very resolutely that I would not leave Italy, the land of my birth. If I was compelled to leave Moreau, so I told him, I would not do so except to go to Holland, and in that event I should never see him again. He asked me if I was in earnest. Upon my reply in the affirmative, he seemed to be deeply pained. He then said, after a few minutes of reflection:

"I feel that I am in an equivocal position. As matters stand at present, I can hardly consider that I am in

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active service. I can, therefore, without any shirking of duty, hand in my resignation to-morrow. Then we can go away together, and I will never leave you again."

"Moreau!" I exclaimed, "do you think I should still want to devote my life to you if you ever ceased being yourself? I shall go alone—that is my answer!"

Moreau was deeply moved by my decision. He told me that he would take every possible step to make my journey safe and pleasant. I was to travel as his wife, and was to go to his house at Chaillot. When I left Milan, Moreau handed me a letter of credit to his banker in Paris, which provided that the sum of twenty-five thousand francs should be placed at my disposal for personal expenses. My departure was retarded for several days. At last I left Milan on the 30th of April, 1799. The name of Moreau's wife paved the way for me everywhere with universal civility and regard. I was touched with the kindness with which I was treated, and was glad to ascribe it to the esteem in which Moreau was held all over Europe.

Moreau had arranged that I should stop at Lyons, at the Hotel Bellecour. The best apartment there was reserved for me, and on arriving I was received by the paymaster-general of the army, Sivelli, and two of his friends, who had been expecting me for a few days. Moreau was an old acquaintance of Sivelli, and had notified him of my proposed stay at Lyons. Sivelli showed me the letter which the general had written him. Moreau had extolled my good qualities and my cleverness, and in fact had made the most of my humble merits. I had stopped with Moreau at Lyons on the way to Milan, since which time I had often been remembered there. Some people who had known me in Holland, before I had separated from my husband, had divulged what tales they knew as to my family and my past life. And these tales had elicited a great deal of curiosity. This

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curiosity, which at first perhaps was not good-natured, soon changed to a kindly attitude. My personal appearance, I am sure, had nothing to do with the good impression I made. People were kind enough to think well of me because of my few good qualities, and especially because of the unceasing affability which I tried to maintain in conduct and speech.

I had been in Lyons for ten days, when a letter came from Moreau announcing that he had been made commander-in-chief and that since then things had taken a happier turn.

The events which now followed were, briefly, these: Moreau got the shattered remains of the army together, at the head of twenty-five thousand men defied a hostile army of four times that number, and retreated through Milan and Piedmont, yielding only step by step. He garrisoned all the fortresses, beat the enemy several times, and through his skilful strategy rendered their numerical superiority of no special avail. He finally concentrated his forces in the neighbourhood of Genoa, where he waited for McDonnell to arrive from Naples, and after meeting that general insured the safety of the troops who had made a long, laborious, and perilous retreat from Naples. In August, 1799, Moreau, without a murmur, surrendered the command of the army he had saved into the hands of General Joubert, who was moved to tears by the excellent condition in which he found it and by the touching simplicity with which Moreau resigned a leadership upon which he had reflected such glory. Moreau afterwards took part in the battle of Novi—where Joubert was killed in one of the first charges—without a command, *as an amateur*. He fought like a true soldier. Three horses were killed under him without his taking his cigar out of his mouth, and he performed prodigies of valour to avert a defeat which himself had foreseen. Invested with the hazardous dis-

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GENERAL JOUBERT
(Engraved after the Portrait by Bouchot)

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tinction of commanding a defeated army by the universal acclaim of officers and men, he once more showed, by not being pursued, how much the enemy was afraid of him. He established himself strongly in the State of Genoa, and paved the way for the success of the general who was to take his place. Upon a fresh order from the Directory he made room for General Championnet, thus giving up for a second time the chieftainship of an army he had twice saved, in obedience to a childish whim of the government.

It was after these events that Moreau returned to Paris, and that the incidents ensued which led to the rupture of our relations.

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CHAPTER V

VISIT TO MLLE. CONTAT — HER DRAMATIC ROLES — DEPARTURE FROM LYONS—M. DE LA RUE, THE BANKER — TALLEYRAND'S INDEBTEDNESS — HIS INDIFFERENCE TO PERJURY — TALLEYRAND AND THE INQUISITIVE COACH-MAKER—HIS EXILE—CARNOT PREFERS SATAN TO HIM—AUDIENCE GRANTED TO IDA — MOONLIGHT WALK WITH MME. TALLIEN — NEY'S EXPLOIT AT MANNHEIM — IDA WRITES AN ARDENT LETTER TO HIM AND A COLD ONE TO MOREAU — AND MISDIRECTS THE ENVELOPES — THE RESULT.

DURING my sojourn in Lyons, I was one day invited to a grand dinner at a rich merchant's, noted for his agreeable social qualities. He was also a great admirer of Moreau. It was at his house that for the first time I met M. de Parny, a nephew of the accomplished poet of the same name. I knew his uncle's poetry, and talked to him about it. He seemed to like the manner in which I expressed the delight I had experienced in reading his uncle's verses. M. de Parny, who since married Mlle. Contat, at this time was at Lyons with her and Molé. I was most desirous of personally knowing this charming actress, whom some have equalled, but who will never be eclipsed. M. de Parny was most polite. In our very first interview he complimented me and flattered my pride in such a delicate way as to make me feel quite at ease with him. He was a particular adept in the art of

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making the person conversing with him appear clever by leading up to the subjects which that person specially affected. Emboldened by his amiability, I ventured to give a somewhat literary turn to our interview. He seemed surprised at the number of French poems I recited from memory, and was good enough to say that, upon the whole, his taste agreed with mine.

When I told him what supreme pleasure I derived from the drama, he asked me in what parts I had seen Mlle. Contat.

"In nearly all the parts she plays," I answered promptly, "and I have always found her acting most admirable."

M. de Parny appeared to be pleased, and added that she would be happy to hear such commendation from my own lips. I therefore resolved to cast the conventions of society to the winds, and to pay Mlle. Contat a visit. Consequently I went to her house the next morning between 10 and 11 o'clock. Scarcely had the manservant uttered the name of Mme. Moreau, when the whole house was in a commotion. Everyone to whom he mentioned my name, as he went to announce me to his mistress, pressed forward to get a look at me. In the meantime, in order to escape all these curious eyes, I had jumped out of my carriage and run up the stairs as quickly as I could. As I reached Mlle. Contat's landing, M. de Parny and Molé came out of an apartment situated on the same floor, and greeted me with much cordiality.

Mlle. Contat, who came out to meet me just as I reached the top of her stairs, invited me to come in. Up till then I had never seen an actress off the stage, and shared the silly prejudice of a number of women who think that the whole attraction of an actress is in her make-up and her costume and the lights, just as they think that it is only her part that makes her manners graceful and elegant.

When I saw Mlle. Contat, her way of speaking and

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MADEMOISELLE CONTAT, THE ACTRESS
(From an Old French Print)

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her distinguished bearing entirely disabused me of all such ideas. It was impossible to imagine a fresher and prettier woman, or one better versed in the usages of good society. Her acting on the stage was really a continuation of her daily habits.

She was then thirty or thirty-two years old. She was already beginning to show signs of stoutness, but this in no way damaged the effect of her figure, which looked to me even finer in her room than on the stage. Everything she wore suited her. The dressing-gown she had on clothed her graceful shape to great advantage. She had blue eyes, a mouth like a rosebud, and magnificent teeth, often discovered by a charming smile. Her face, a handsome oval, was crowned with a luxuriant head of hair, blonde and silky, which she wore unpowdered. A pretty little pert, tip-tilted nose completed her seductions. Among Mlle. Contat's artistic triumphs one of the greatest was the role of Suzanne in the "Marriage of Figaro," which she created with all the perfection of her wonderful talent in 1784, while her youth, sprightliness, and beauty did everything that was possible to reinforce acting that was already peerless. The part, as it was written, was fascinating enough, but Mlle. Contat added so much to its effectiveness that Beaumarchais himself was surprised. Never has music imparted to language a like expression to that which the mouth of the cleverest of interpreters gave the sallies of one of the greatest wits who ever penned word upon paper.

Mlle. Contat's real name was Louise Perrin. Her mother, a washerwoman in the suburb of Saint-Germain, had had Préville and Molé as customers, who from time to time had given her tickets for performances at the Comédie-Francaise, to which she used to take her daughter. It was thus that the little one acquired a taste for the stage. Herself finally created Rosina in the "Barber of Seville," and Suzanne in the "Marriage of Figaro,"

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as well as the principal female part in the "Guilty Mother," besides other important parts that might be mentioned, in all of which she earned brilliant success.

The day after I met Mlle. Contat I went to the theatre to see her and Molé in the "Misanthrope." I was handsomely gowned in a low-necked dress, and wore my finest jewels. My vanity was flattered by the compliments I received at all hands. But they affected me less than the silent looks of admiration from M. de Parny, that acknowledged judge of female beauty, whose eyes told me eloquently enough how good-looking he thought me. His mouth could have added nothing.

On the day following this there was an excursion into the country and a rural banquet. I put on my men's clothes and told Sivelli that I wanted to ride his English horse, which was a fiery beast. Sivelli made several objections to which I paid no heed. The horse was brought out, I jumped boldly into the saddle, and I managed my steed with such skill as to set Sivelli's anxiety at rest for good and all on the subject of my equestrian abilities. Reaching the place where we were to dine, we found a table set under a bower of charming, leafy old trees. The greatest merriment prevailed all through the repast. After dessert I was asked to sing. I took a guitar which was handed to me, with the intention of singing some topical song that had been suggested, when I suddenly hit upon another idea. I threw down my guitar, and in a glow of enthusiasm intoned the "Marseillaise." The company surrounded me and seized my hands, and it seems to me that some of them even took the liberty of kissing me—under the stress of patriotic feeling.

On the 23rd of June, 1799, I left Lyons, where I had been met with so much kindness and good will, and had made so many new friends. The remembrance of the treatment I received at that time from society in Lyons

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is the dearer to me since in less happier times, when I was in Lyons again, I found friends there whose attachment and devotion to me did not fail me in some of the greatest vicissitudes of my agitated career.

After a very quick journey I arrived at Chaillot, mentally and physically exhausted. Everything was ready for my reception, in conformity with instructions given by the master of the house. All the resources of luxury had been drawn upon to deck out my apartment handsomely and comfortably. The isolation in which I found myself, however, saddened me considerably for the time being.

I was known at Chaillot by the name of Mme. Moreau. My passport deposited at the police prefecture stated that the wife of General Moreau had arrived from Italy. A number of visitors called upon me, from motives of politeness or curiosity. But I declined to see any of them. Invitations too showered in from all sides. They remained unanswered.

But a letter that came from Moreau gave room for some reflection on my part. He once more said that he was most desirous of becoming my husband, thus binding me to him indefinitely in legitimate union. He informed me at the same time that my family was negotiating with my husband's—who had gone to Surinam to attend to some business—with the object of arranging our final separation. My parents had written directly to Moreau. Holding his character in the highest esteem, they left it to his honour to give me back the social position from which I ought never to have fallen.

After shutting my door to everyone for a long time, I at last felt the need for intercourse with the outer world. I thus made the acquaintance of M. de la Rue, a banker and a compatriot of Moreau, and a brother-in-law of the notorious contractor Solié.

M. de la Rue was an altogether insignificant person,

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devoid of either strikingly bad or remarkably good qualities; his intelligence was bounded by rows of figures, and his conversation, as may be easily guessed, had few charms for me. On the occasion of his very first visit he told me that the general had instructed him to open me an unlimited credit at his bank. He then asked my permission to bring Mme. de la Rue, who requested the honour of being presented to the wife of General Moreau.

She came a few days later, escorted by her husband. She was far from being either tactful or as well balanced in temper as he. On the other hand she was lively and keen, and exercised great influence over her husband. In the beginning of my friendship with Moreau she had attempted to induce M. de la Rue to damage me in the general's opinion. Moreau had told me of this little intrigue at the time of our journey to Italy. Neither M. or Mme. de la Rue was unaware that I was not properly married to Moreau. This they had known all along, and although they had no reason to believe that my position was now altered, they did not scruple to call me by a name to which I was in no way entitled. I acknowledged that I felt a malicious joy in seeing their pride lowered to such a degree, especially as I was acquainted with their real sentiments towards me. I was civil, but nothing more, to M. de la Rue and his wife.

One day the banker came to ask me to try to influence M. de Talleyrand, with whom he frequently had financial dealings. M. de Talleyrand had been minister of home affairs since the 14th of July, 1797, on which date a reconstruction of the cabinet had taken place.

The case of M. de Talleyrand, a priest, then a bishop under Louis XVI. and at the beginning of the Revolution, excommunicated, a royalist and an exile, a few years later through his cleverness and his genius for political intrigue being entrusted with the direction of the foreign affairs of a republic which had abolished titles and

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privileges, seemed to me one of the most remarkable things connected with a revolution which certainly abounded in noteworthy occurrences.

In the reign of Louis XVI., Maurice de Talleyrand, the "Abbé Maurice de Périgord," as he was called, was made agent-general of the clergy of France, a most lucrative post. A fixed salary was attached to it of eighteen thousand francs, with numerous perquisites. The agent-general of the clergy was a sort of treasurer, upon whom also devolved the duty of administering the revenues of the Church in France, which at that time were enormous. The Abbé Maurice became friends with M. de Calonne, the comptroller-general of finance, who left the State deeper in debt than he found it. M. de Calonne brought two men together who were born to understand each other, Mirabeau and Talleyrand. After an intimate connection they were for some time sundered by politics. One day, in the Constituent Assembly, Talleyrand was refuting an argument of Mirabeau who exclaimed:

"Wait, I will put you in a tight place!"

"Then you propose to embrace me!"

They did, in fact, embrace. Their reconciliation was complete. When Mirabeau died he appointed Talleyrand one of his testamentary executors.

In January, 1789, the Abbé de Périgord was created Bishop of Autun with twenty-four thousand francs pay, and the 14th of July, 1790, was selected by Louis XVI. to celebrate mass at the ceremony of federation. One is tempted to ask one's self, in view of the morals of the bishop of Autun being so well known, if there was not a hint of secret irony in the selection made by the King. The performance was extraordinary. Talleyrand, going up to the altar with two priests in attendance, bent over to La Fayette and whispered to him:

"Now, please don't make me laugh."

Besides this, the next day he wrote his mistress, the

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Countess de Flahaut, a letter in which he made game of the ceremony in which he had acted as a bishop. Well-informed people—there are always plenty of them—have asserted that Mme. de Flahaut's children were Talleyrand's. Mme. de Flahaut was then 25 and Talleyrand 31. A few months after the mass I have mentioned, and just after the passing of the vote for the civil constitution of the clergy, he wrote this lady a note containing the following lines, which were true of the man's future statesmanship:

"After all the vows we have made and broken, after having so often sworn fidelity to a constitution, to nature, to the law, to the king, to all sorts of things existing only in name, what can one oath more matter?"

At this time of his life Talleyrand was constantly in debt, and often unable to meet his engagements. Upon his nomination to the bishopric he ordered a magnificent episcopal coach, which did him great credit, but for which he did not pay. After waiting a long time, his coachmaker at last came to the conclusion that he would post himself at his lordship's door every day, hat in hand, and would bow very low when the bishop got into his carriage. When he had been doing this for several days, Talleyrand spoke to him:

"Who may you be, my friend?"

"I am your coachmaker, my Lord."

"Ah! you are my coachmaker! And what does my coachmaker want?"

"To be paid, my Lord."

"Ah! you are my coachmaker, and you want to be paid! My coachmaker shall be paid."

"But when, my Lord?"

"Hm!" observed the bishop, stretching himself out comfortably in his new carriage, "how inquisitive you are!"

He took the oath subscribing to the civil constitution of the clergy, and then, alleging his election as a member

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C.ES M.R DE TALLEYRAND-PERIGORD
EVÊQUE D'AUTUN
Né à Paris en 1754
Député d'Autun
à l'Assemblée Nationale de 1789.

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of the Directory of Paris, presented his resignation from his episcopal see to the king. His part in the events of the 10th of August, 1792, is well known.

Impeached upon the discovery of his letters, and inscribed on the general list of exiles, Talleyrand took good care not to come back to France, where his head would not have been safe on his shoulders. But he corresponded with people in France from London. He was ordered by the British government, as an exile under suspicion, to leave British territory within the space of five days. He left for the United States in March, 1794. There he remained nearly two years, while setting all his influence in motion among his friends, among whom Mme. de Stael was especially active, to have his name removed from the list of exiles. On the fourth of September, 1795, Chénier succeeded in inducing the Convention to issue a decree authorizing Talleyrand's return to France. He arrived in Paris in the spring of 1796, and about eighteen months later, through his own intrigues, through the friendship of Barras, and through the influence of Mme. de Stael and others, became minister of foreign affairs, in spite of Carnot's righteous and formidable opposition. It is stated that there was some strong language exchanged between two of the directors of the Republic, on the subject of Talleyrand.

"This rascal," said Carnot, "will sell us all in the open market if he can gain anything by it!"

"Well, whom has he sold so far?" asked Larévellière.

"His God, in the first place!"

"He did not believe in Him."

"Then, why did he serve Him? Next, he betrayed his King."

"Have we any right to take him to task for that?"

"Listen, Larévellière, compare me to the devil if you like, but never compare me to that man! It would make me furious!"

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Talleyrand became minister notwithstanding. The help he needed to get into power he managed to dispense with when it came to staying there. From the moment of his promotion to the cabinet, he made it the main object to accumulate wealth. In the three years of his ministerial tenure he contrived to amass a considerable amount through the sale of patronage. The facts which came to light and the consequent scandal resulted in his removal from the secretaryship of foreign affairs in July, 1799.

In the spring of that year I was ignorant of all these details when M. de la Rue asked me to speak to M. de Talleyrand for him. Glad enough to find an opportunity to satisfy my curiosity about the famous minister, I promised M. de la Rue to do my best to procure him an audience with M. de Talleyrand. Only, I begged him to wait two or three days for the execution of our plans. He left me delighted at having so quickly obtained the promise he wanted, having by no means expected such a favourable issue to his visit.

To fulfil the promise made to M. de la Rue I had asked for an audience at the office of the minister of foreign affairs, which was granted without further ado.

The amiable look which greeted me on my appearance in the minister's study restored to me all the confidence I had lost and without which a woman's personal advantages can make no impression. What I had heard of M. de Talleyrand's penetration and extraordinary cleverness took me aback when I was confronted with him, although I usually did not suffer from a want of self-assurance. I wanted him to have a favourable opinion of me, yet I thought he must find me far below his intellectual level. In his bearing as well as in his face there was an atmosphere of suffering which contrasted strangely with his bright conversation. The most exaggerated compliments I had hitherto been

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paid in society did not please my vanity half as much as a single word of praise from Talleyrand.

"Madam," said the minister, "do you say that you have come to recommend some one? Are you sure about the person's qualifications? Or did any one suppose that your presence here would be sufficient to endorse an unworthy claim?"

"I do not know the petitioner personally, although I know something about the individual who asked me to present the petition. I thought that the most charming man in France would not like to hurt me with a refusal, and so I came. Do you decline to listen to me?"

"No, Madam, quite the contrary. But to grant what you wish to-day would be to deprive myself of the pleasure of another meeting. Allow me, therefore, to assign you another audience for a date a few days hence."

I then believed, in the innocence of my heart, that a minister's time must be very valuable. I made motion to withdraw. M. de Talleyrand kept me back a few minutes more. I finally left more satisfied with myself than I had been for some time.

After dinner that evening I retreated to my room to read my letters. I had given orders that no visitors should be admitted, intending to spend the rest of the evening alone. But soon the porter's wife came in with an anxious look on her face, saying that a lady had arrived who had insisted upon forcing her way into the house, in spite of my orders to the contrary. Scarcely had I found time to ask her the name of the intruder, when Mme. Tallien entered the room. She had come in spite of having been refused admission, upon the strength of the promise I had given her that I would see her at any time she chose. Mme. Tallien was an open-handed, charitable woman, and secretly did a lot of good among the poor. That very day she had gone to Passy in the strictest incognito to bring succour to a

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respectable family which had lost its entire fortune and also all of its bread-winners in the cause of the Revolution. The ascendancy she exercised over Barras put her in a position to do good works of all kinds, and she certainly always showed an unselfish and a disinterested spirit in this respect. But this very generosity of hers did not prevent her from being subjected to the ingratitude of some of the people whom she had done most to help.

We spent two hours walking in the garden in the light of the moon, and from the tree-shaded terrace could discern the picturesque quays of the Seine. The venerable stream and its interesting associations gave Mme. Tallien room for her brilliant conversational gifts to display themselves, so that although she only left me at a late hour I regretted her departure.

After she had gone I went back to my room and my correspondence. There was a letter from Mannheim which told me of a fresh exploit of General Ney. He had penetrated into Mannheim alone to gain intelligence as to the strength of the garrison. He found out all he wanted to know about the fortress, and five days later took possession of it, making his way in in the dead of night with a hundred and fifty men determined to conquer or die with him. The same letter contained an account of a very different affair. A young and beautiful German girl had come to implore the general's protection for her father's house, which the French soldiery threatened to pillage. Ney took no advantage of the girl, and sent her away after promising that her father's house would be spared. To those who jested with him on this subject he said that he cared for nothing but spontaneous love, and that he never took by force what the heart did not freely offer. This I thought a most admirable thing and the act of a true hero. The thought shot into my mind: "At least I will let him

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BARRAS
(Engraved from a Drawing by Raffet)

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know what a high opinion I have of him!" Seizing my pen, I dashed off the following letter:

"I obey the dictates of my heart without waiting for vain excuses. I am not familiar with the art of disguising my feelings. Besides, there is something in the bottom of my heart which tells me if what I am doing offends against the conventional rules, it may find favour in the sight of a man of such noble honesty as yours. Only once have I seen you with my eyes, and your picture is engraved in my soul. Always with you in thought, I have trembled whenever you were in peril, I have rejoiced at all your triumphs, and I have enthusiastically applauded every account of your fine deeds. My position in the world is splendid: there are women who envy me. I would give it all up in a moment to become a partner with you in danger. Respect and gratitude have bound me to General Moreau. To make confession of it in a letter such as this, is that not running the risk of making myself contemptible before you? But I feel quite unable to choke the irresistible cry of my heart. In making this avowal of the sentiment which destroys my peace, I have no other purpose than of letting you know that far away from you is a woman to whom your fame is no less dear than it is to yourself."

I was in a great state of agitation while writing this letter. Just before, I had written Moreau a few commoplace pages—my weekly letter to him. I put the missives in the wrong envelopes. Moreau received the letter intended for Ney, and Ney that which ought to have gone to Moreau. I was soon to learn what a fatal mistake I had made. From Ney's own mouth I learnt what a curious impression was made upon him by a rather cold letter, which betrayed no more than a long, humdrum intimacy. But what must Moreau's grief have been when he held in his hands the absolute proof that my heart belonged to him no longer! He sent me

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not a word of reproach." He simply stopped writing to me.

In leaving General Moreau, I took the final step which lost me whatever claim I still had upon the consideration of society. and whatever esteem was due to me from the rest of the world. These memoirs are my confession. May you who read it be warned by my sad example. Always cling to the truth! Fly from falsehood and dissimulation! The fruit of sin is very bitter.

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CHAPTER VI

BEAUMARCHAIS — ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION OF THE "MARRIAGE OF FIGARO" — THE SEVEN OF DIAMONDS — BEAUMARCHAIS AS A HUMORIST IN REAL LIFE — DRAMATIC ASPIRATIONS OF THE "CONTEMPORARY" — MOREAU'S DISAPPROVAL OF THEM — FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF BONAPARTE — THE CONSPIRACY OF THE 18TH OF BRUMAIRE — THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND THE CONSULS — MOREAU MARRIES A FRIEND OF JOSEPHINE DE BEAUHARNAIS — A PAIR OF SHREWS.

WHILE waiting to select an apartment, I lived at the Hotel Rue Richelieu. I found a very pretty house in the Rue Taitbout, with an apartment, which, though comfortable and handsomely furnished, yet in no way approached the sumptuous dwelling I had before occupied. But I was satisfied with anything so long as I was not tied to Moreau. My delight was immense to find myself established in new lodgings. I was free; I was at home.

During this year (1798), and the spring of 1799, I often went to see old Beaumarchais, who had recently come back to France, and who treated me with great kindness. The illustrious dramatist inhabited a charming house which he had had built at the end of the Boulevard Saint-Antoine. Installed in his new residence in 1791, he had been obliged to leave it the next year. Informed against, thrown into prison, his goods confiscated,

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he only escaped death by going into exile, whence he did not return until the beginning of 1794, when his name was taken off the list of persons banished. It always gave me genuine pleasure to meet him. This man, who was so tremendous in his wrath, this precursor of the French Revolution, to which his "Marriage of Figaro," the sequel to "The Barber of Seville," was a literary firebrand, was in private life one of the most harmless and gentlest of men. Strongly endowed with domestic affection, and very sensible of it, he was adored by his family and his servants. He lived surrounded by true and devoted friends, who remained faithful to him for many long years, without failing. His love for his family was remarkable. He never ceased, even when his position was most embarrassing, from being the guardian angel and the support of his relations, bestowing gifts and allowances upon his father, his sisters, his nephews, his nieces, and even very distant relatives. Upon his death the heirs found in the documents he left behind records of more than nine hundred thousand francs lent without security to artists, actors, men of letters, and persons in ill-luck belonging to all shades of society. Everyone with a scheme, ruined noblemen, and all needy persons of his acquaintance made a constant siege upon his exchequer. He was obliged to turn a large number of them away, who thereupon of course became his bitter enemies, like for instance Mirabeau, like the pamphleteer Rivarol, whose wife and child Beaumarchais fed after they had been abandoned by that champion of the throne and the altar.

Beaumarchais was a most engaging talker. His conversation was studded with interesting anecdotes. He one day told me the story of the performance of "The Marriage of Figaro." His persistent enemy, Suard, who had been royal censor since 1774, had done everything

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in his power to prevent the performance of this play. It was given in spite of his efforts. Suard revenged himself by publishing in the *Journal de Paris* a letter in which Beaumarchais' pledge to make over the whole of his author's royalty to wet-nurses in distress was held up to ridicule, and made the subject of scandalous comment. It seems that the Count de Provence, who later on became Louis XVIII., and who fancied himself as a literary light, had collaborated in this letter. Beaumarchais, well aware who the exalted collaborator was, but none the less wounded by the letter, replied with some written sarcasms about certain great French battles, which brought the laugh on his side. The first prince of the blood on this occasion behaved with a singular want of generosity. Alleging that Beaumarchais had insulted him, he asked his brother, during a game of cards with him, for an order for Beaumarchais' arrest. Louis XVI. wrote on the back of a seven of diamonds an order to have Beaumarchais taken, not to the Bastille, a State prison of course too fine for such a scribbler, but to the house of correction at Saint-Lazare. The dramatist was not kept there long, however. The public was indignant at the arrest, and the voice of popular anger was so loud that Beaumarchais was released a few days after his incarceration. At the performance of "The Marriage of Figaro," which was given the same day, a tempest of applause greeted this sentence in one of the monologues:

"When they cannot subdue a man's spirit, they take revenge by misusing him."

Beaumarchais entertained a profound admiration for Napoleon, and always spoke of him with enthusiasm. "It is not for history but for eternity," said he during the Egyptian campaign, "that this young man is working. He transcends probability; his ideas and actions are all marvel. When I read his bulletins I think I am

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reading a chapter of the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments.'"

On one occasion, when I was visiting him, Beaumarchais told me what happened to him with Fabre (d'Eglantine), author of "Philinte," a play supposed to be the sequel to Molière's "Misanthrope," and the writer of other less-known pieces. Before the Revolution, Fabre, an obscure actor and entirely unknown author, had been favoured by Beaumarchais with a loan of 25 *louis*. I have already mentioned how generous he was. Several years went by. Beaumarchais heard no more of his 25 *louis*. But I cannot say the same for Fabre d'Eglantine, who had become an important politician and a member of various committees. One day when Beaumarchais was coming out of a government office, he met his old debtor on the stairs, also about to leave the building. Fabre was so condescending as to recognize Beaumarchais. He went even further. A fine carriage was waiting for him below. Beaumarchais was walking.

"May I drive you anywhere?" Fabre glibly asked the author of the "Marriage of Figaro."

Beaumarchais accepted the invitation, mentioning the place where he desired to be put down. Then, as the other man talked of everything excepting the 25 *louis* he had once borrowed, Beaumarchais at last said, after attentively looking the handsome carriage all over:

"This is a beautiful carriage you have here, Citizen—splendid horses, magnificent harness. Now, I should like to bet that all this must have cost you more than 25 *louis*! I think——"

"Here we are at your destination, I believe!" suddenly interrupted Fabre d'Eglantine, pulling the coachman's rope and opening the carriage door, while he excused himself from taking Beaumarchais any further. The dramatist found himself standing in the road, with the carriage rolling rapidly away.

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A few months later Fabre ascended the scaffold—"without ever having paid me back my 25 *louis*, poor fellow!" Beaumarchais smilingly wound up his little story.

For a long time I had not known so sweet an awakening as that of the first morning in my new apartment. After rising, I walked about my rooms in my dressing-gown and with my hair down, feeling like a queen in my small domain. I happened to see myself in a large mirror, and seized with a sudden impulse I arranged my hair, gathered my dressing-gown about me, and began to recite a passage from the tragedy of "Iphigenia." My maid, Adelaide, who happened to come in during this performance, loudly exclaimed:

"Oh! how lovely you would look on the stage!"

What do resolutions count for after all? Upon this absurd dramatic bed-room triumph, a wild thought shot into my brain: what if I went upon the stage!

I thought of a means of finding out as soon as possible what the chances would be in my favour. Molé, whose acquaintance I had made at Lyons, was then in Paris. I wrote to ask him for an interview. His answer was as polite and amiable as possible, and it was to the effect that he would expect me the same day. Molé accorded me a most flattering reception, and even after learning why and how I had left Chaillot, giving up a social position and a name, he was no whit less polite nor affable towards me. I broached the subject without diffidence. Molé, in his habitually pleasant way, gave me substantial encouragement. He made me recite several speeches from different parts which I knew by heart. He came to the conclusion that I should be more apt to impersonate queens than young princesses in the classical drama. He spoke to me in a fatherly manner, and ended the interview by asking me to return in a few days. By that time, he said, he would have

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found me some one to rehearse with. He escorted me to my carriage with the delightful courtesy and urbanity proper to the practice of his profession.

My head being turned by what I had heard from Molé, I insisted on beginning my dramatic studies at once. That very evening I went with Adelaide to see Talma in "Macbeth." My dress was of the plainest kind. Instead of wishing to attract attention, I tried to avoid it. Nevertheless, as I walked through the peristyle and the corridors of the Théâtre-Français, I observed some whisperings among some people who seemed to recognize me, less on account of my dress than by reason of my individual look, in which the simplicity of my garment made no change.

I was sitting in a box on the floor of the theatre with Adelaide, waiting for the curtain to rise, when the door of the box opened and someone came in. It was M. Le Couteulx de Canteleu. I had met him on the occasion of my first visit to Paris, but since my return had not had an opportunity of seeing him. He was very fond of Moreau, who had several times invited him to Passy and had presented him to me there. I found great pleasure in his society. At the time of which I write, M. de Canteleu would have been regarded as an old man. I liked him because of his cordiality, and took pains to evoke his friendship. On this evening, however, he seemed preoccupied and disinclined to talk. After a few minutes he made it evident that he proposed to withdraw, when I asked him if he would not accept a seat in my box. No sooner had he assented by a bow, than the curtain rose. Talma, the grand object of my dramatic admiration, appeared on the scene. I drank in every word that came from his lips. When the curtain had gone down I resumed conversation with M. de Canteleu. From a few words that escaped him I learnt that he was informed as to my rupture with Moreau, and

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that this was the cause of his silence. I asked him to speak frankly. He said:

"Then you have left Chaillot and Moreau?"

I hung my head without answering.

"Oh, how sorry I am!" said M. de Canteleu. "Return to that heart which is so worthy of you! Moreau, who can love as no one else can, will be as ready to forgive as he is able to love."

This language and these accents from a man who might have been my father, or my old familiar friend, affected though they did not convince me. M. de Canteleu made me promise to meet him in the fine garden belonging to his house, to talk about the general towards whom he felt so strong an attachment and so lively an interest, both of which were well merited.

In spite of my frivolity, I was deeply stirred by this conversation. I came away from the play sad and thoughtful, having almost, in fact, come to my senses, and resolving to go to the Dutch ambassador as soon as possible to ask him to intercede for me with my family. The next morning I learnt that Moreau had arrived, and that Ney was expected. My heart told me that once more fate had taken a new turn.

After Moreau's arrival in Paris I trembled at the very thought of seeing him, and yet I felt the need of doing so. Did not delicacy suggest that I surrender to him the authorization to draw upon the funds deposited with M. de la Rue? My sense of honour inspired me with courage to write to him on this matter.

The day he paid me a visit his reproaches were so mild and so kind, and his sadness was so gentle, that I besought him with repentant sobs to give me back his friendship.

"My friendship, Elzelina! That sentiment may be enough for you, but it is no return for love, and I love you—you, who love another!" Thus replied Moreau.

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I was unable to answer a word. Moreau hereupon produced a letter. It was that which I had written to Ney, and sent by mistake to him.

"Elzelina," said Moreau, "I do not understand this passionate outburst you made to Ney, in which you seem to have forgotten your womanly dignity altogether."

"There is no explanation. He hardly knows me, and will probably never love me."

"Listen," Moreau went on, "this is the last time that I shall refer to the subject. Ney will never make you happy. I know him and I admire him, but there is no happiness for a woman with him, in spite of his splendid qualities and his fiery soul. Fierce caprice is all that a woman can expect of him, and this is very different from the durable affection that women ask for."

After speaking to me for some length in this strain, in his attempt to bring me back to reason, but without result, Moreau bade me good-bye:

"God bless you! I shall never see you again! But you will never be a stranger to me. As a friend of your family I shall consider that I have a right to watch over you. Before I go I shall see to it that you are provided for."

"I beg you to spare me such a humiliation!" I cried. "You have done too much for me already. Take back these witnesses of your generosity and your goodness." With which I handed him the papers conferring such extensive powers upon me to make use of his name and fortune. After yielding to my insistence on this point he took his departure.

In this interview, that lasted two hours, I had confessed everything to him except my plan to take up the dramatic career. I remember I asked him in vain to give me back my portrait. It was a pretty miniature by Isabey's brush, and the general refused to give it up. I had also had the honour of being represented in the

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form of a statue. The talented sculptor Lemot had reproduced my features to such advantage that the work excited great and general admiration in the artist's studio and at the Louvre. He modelled me reclining on a couch in the attitude of Cleopatra. Moreau, who had strict views of female modesty, had first censured what he called my shameless vanity. He affected disdain for this artistic production. But sometimes men are very much pleased with what they have before criticised. When Moreau at last expressed his desire to own the statue which he had originally inveighed against, it was too late. I had already promised it to M. de Talleyrand.

General Moreau wished me to write to him. In deference to his wishes I did so, and in a respectful manner told him of my wish to enter upon the dramatic profession, saying that by this means I hoped to gain an honest livelihood for myself. I shall not record his answer out of regard for his reputation. I may say, however, that in reading it I was dumbfounded to see how sometimes the vulgarest prejudices may possess even the best educated people. The stage, and all who belonged to it and did it honour, he characterized in terms of insulting contempt in his letter. He went on to threaten me with deprivation of my liberty if I persisted in my extravagant ideas. I replied in ironical language to his reproofs to me for having forgotten my good birth and for derogating from my rank, in saying how well such remarks sounded from a valiant champion of republican equality! My letter remained unanswered, Moreau having left Paris that same day.

While I had been passing my time without concern or care, certain grave happenings foreshadowed by M. Le Couteulx had come about. Four days after Moreau's visit the events of the 18th and 19th of Brumaire of the year VII. (the 9th and 10th of November, 1797) had

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brought with them a change of government. Instead of five directors there were now three provisionary consuls: Bonaparte, Roger-Ducos, Siéyès, the last two being soon replaced by Cambacérès and Lebrun. France had found a master at last.

Up till then I had seen Napoleon but once. His appearance—he was extremely slim at the time I mention—had differed so much from my conception of a hero, that my first impression of him was not at all agreeable. The negligence with which he let his straight hair fall over his face, his excessive leanness, and his almost habitual untidiness in dress would have repelled me had it been anyone else. But the fire shining in his eye and his keen penetrating glance compelled consideration, and gave promise of something unusual in this young man.

At the change of government Moreau had gladly accepted a secondary part. Hating the Directory, he readily lent his aid to Bonaparte, for whom he had no liking. He only understood his mistake after things had got beyond remedy. Once more he was a victim of his vacillation and his indecision of character. But it was too late then: a page of history cannot be blotted out.

The conspiracy of the 18th and 19th of Brumaire, the transfer of the debates to Saint-Cloud, and the handing over of the command of the army in Paris to Napoleon with extraordinary powers, had been effected with the complicity of three of the directors out of five: Siéyès, Barras, and Roger-Ducos. The president of the Directory, Gohier, and his colleague, General Moulins, were left out of the conspiracy. Bonaparte showed great cleverness in the appointment he gave his rival. He entrusted Moreau with the command of a body of 500 men charged with the military occupation of the Luxembourg palace, the headquarters of the government.

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(*From an Engraving by Bonneville*)

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LEBRUN, THIRD CONSUL
(Drawn by Lacauchie, Engraved by Monin)

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These troops were also to keep Gohier and Moulins in custody, and were to act as substitutes for the guard of the Directory, which was stationed in the Tuileries. This guard of the Directory formed the nucleus of the consular guard, which afterwards became the imperial guard. Moreau was thus, in the eyes of the public, made a jailer. On the 18th of Brumaire the directors who were on General Bonaparte's side left the Luxembourg early in the morning. Siéyès, who that day sat on a horse for the only time in his life, and Roger-Ducos, who was on horseback also, but a better rider than Siéyès, took their letters of resignation at a trot to the "Council of the Ancients" sitting at the Tuileries. Barras, after making a pretence of yielding to force, sent his to Napoleon during the morning by his secretary. The remaining occurrences of the 18th and 19th are too well known to need repetition here.

The new constitution, known as the constitution of the year VII, was promulgated on the 22nd of Frimaire (December 13th, 1799). By this constitution the executive power was placed in the hands of three consuls, the first two elected for ten years and the third for five, all with the right of re-election. They were Bonaparte, Cambacérès and Lebrun. The first consul nominated the ministers, promulgated the laws, selected the members of the Council of State and the diplomatic envoys, made promotions in the army and the navy, and appointed civil officials. He was paid a salary of five hundred thousand francs. The other two consuls had nothing but a consultative voice in affairs, and only one hundred and sixty thousand francs a year. The Council of State proposed the laws; the Tribunate discussed them; the Legislative Assembly ratified or rejected them; the Senate, composed of life members, ensured their integrity and execution.

From the beginning of the Consulate Moreau sulked

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openly. In the spring of 1799 he had married Mlle. Hulot, a creole of the island of Martinique. This lady's mother had formerly been acquainted with Mme. de Beauharnais, who became Mme. Bonaparte, and who indirectly brought about the match with Moreau. Mme. Moreau was one of Steibelt's best pupils. She played remarkably well on the piano, could accompany her own singing on the harp, painted miniatures, and spoke several languages. She was rather pretty, with a slim, pale face. She was conspicuous for the apathy common to most creoles, as well as for their grace. This quality had fascinated Moreau upon meeting her in society. Mme. and Mlle. Hulot were regular frequenters of Mme. Bonaparte's house. After Moreau's marriage, which took place during the Egyptian campaign, they ceased from visiting there.

When Bonaparte had become first consul, Mme. Hulot, instead of exerting herself to pacify Moreau, who was already sufficiently wrought up against his rival, took the contrary, deplorable part. Jealous, arrogant, bitter, and unendurable as she was, she incessantly reproached her son-in-law with having assisted Napoleon's cause on the 18th of Brumaire. She succeeded in bringing about a quarrel between the two men by obliging Moreau to refuse repeated invitations to dinner, to evening parties, and to balls, at Malmaison in the first place, and afterwards at the Tuileries, which invitations were sent by the first consul and by Josephine to General and Mme. Moreau, and which they at last grew tired of sending in vain.

In Napoleon's opinion both mother and daughter were noxious creatures. "They are Moreau's bad angels," he said, "and their influence will do him great harm." And this view of the first consul was ultimately verified.

Mme. Hulot and her daughter distinguished themselves by worse and worse impudences. Having come to the

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Tuileries one day, and not having been able to see Bonaparte, who was busy with the Council of State, Mme. Moreau went away after an hour's waiting, making a great fuss. She exclaimed aloud as she left:

"The wife of the victor of Hohenlinden did not come here to sit about anterooms! The Republican directors would have been more polite!"

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CHAPTER VII

POWER OF THE BANKERS AND ARMY CONTRACTORS — THEIR INTRIGUES—OPULENCE OF THE BANKER OUVRARD — FESTIVITIES AT HIS ESTATE — A SYMPOSIUM OF BEAUTY AND BRAINS — BONAPARTE'S CONTEMPT FOR MONEY — FASHIONABLE DRESSING UNDER THE DIRECTORY — LUCIEN BONAPARTE, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS — CHAPTAL, HIS SUCCESSOR — IMPUDENT M. DE MONTMORENCY — THE AUTHORESS' FIASCO ON THE STAGE OF THE THEATRE-FRANCAIS.

DURING the concluding months of 1799 and the spring of 1800, I continued my life of independence, taking lessons in declamation at irregular intervals, visiting and receiving my friends, riding out on horseback, and frequently going to the play at the Théâtre-Français especially, where I was now acquainted with most of the actors, and at the Opéra-Comique. Otherwise, my social connections were chiefly with the world of business and finance, which at that time was conspicuous in Paris for its lavish, prodigal style of living. The financiers, the manufacturers of arms and ammunition, and the purveyors of army-supplies cut a great figure towards the end of the Directory and at the beginning of the Consulate. Later on, Napoleon, who considered that excessive wealth accumulated in the hands of individuals gave rise to speculations injurious and even dangerous to the public weal, never allowed the kings of commerce to take rank with his generals.

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Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, before I left Paris, mentioned to me a memorandum concerning the financiers, which had been composed by Fouché for Bonaparte, and was subsequently presented to the Council of State. The minister of police in this document informed the first consul that the bankers of Paris juggled the prices of public bonds up and down as they pleased, by virtue of the enormous capital at their command. Between them they controlled about a hundred millions of francs in cash and a credit of the same size. One of them, Haller by name, had suggested a financial scheme to Bonaparte which had been rejected. He had also prophesied that if his advice was not taken government securities would drop, and that Bonaparte would be held responsible for it. In spite of said refusal, before Brumaire Napoleon had been glad enough to avail himself of an offer from the banker Collot to draw upon him to the extent of a million francs. The same banker also lent Joseph Bonaparte a very large sum when he purchased Morfontaine.

After the 18th of Brumaire Napoleon found the public exchequer empty, and tried to borrow twelve millions of dollars from the Dutch, upon the security of timber lands belonging to the State. Payment was to be made at the end of a year. Marmont was sent to Amsterdam, furnished with full authority to act for the French Government, and M. de Semonville, the French Minister to Holland, was ordered to second Marmont's efforts. In spite of long continued negotiations the special envoy failed to accomplish his purpose. Bonaparte for a long time bore malice against Holland for refusing to lend him money.

After Brumaire the 19th of the year VIII, as I said, during the first part of the Consulate, the bankers and the people who supplied the troops maintained the same place of importance and influence which they had held under the Directory. They were constantly before the

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public eye, composing as they did a section of the fashionable society of the day. Bonaparte called the contractors and their kind "the leprosy of the nation." At the beginning of the Consulate they really constituted a formidable power, with all their agents and all their clients. They had more or less had the Directory under their thumb, and they attempted to make the Consulate their tool in the same way. But the first consul sent them all about their business. Upon his accession he had found himself besieged by the wives of the contractors. All of them were charming and highly fashionable women. For those two qualities the female folk of these schemers were conspicuous, which fact entered largely into the success of their speculations. It was resolved to exclude these ladies from the society of the Tuileries, whose ranks were meagre enough. The nobility was already tabooed in deference to public opinion. When, therefore, these others were shut out for the sake of raising the moral tone of society, there was not much society left. Hence the consular court was for some time a sort of magic-lantern show with mixed pictures and a great many changes. The public was angry with the army contractors and purveyors of supplies, because, while they were making immense fortunes, the troops were actually suffering from want. Napoleon showed great severity towards malfeasance of this sort. Ouvrard, one of the worst offenders, he caused to be imprisoned more than once during his reign as emperor.

In the early days of the consulate Ouvrard's power was at its height, and on his splended property at Raincy gorgeous festivities were enacted, as to one of which I was given the details by a friend who was present. Raincy, situated some four miles from Paris, had before the Revolution belonged to the Duke d'Orléans. But Ouvrard, vying in extravagance with a pre-Revolutionary farmer-general of revenues, had Raincy improved and embel-

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lished until it became a veritable paradise. The estate bordered on the forest of Bondy, famous as the erstwhile retreat of robbers, which circumstance gave rise to malicious remarks among Parisian wits.

The grand affair in question was held in honour of the illustrious Fox, the English minister who was so good a friend to France, and whose death, a few months later, was an irreparable loss to both countries, which under his rule would have remained at peace, instead of becoming furious foes. Lord Holland and Lady Holland, a niece of Fox, were with the great statesman. The flower of Parisian society had been invited to meet them. Mme. Tallien, the then Egeria of the banker, did the honours. There was a late breakfast, served with great magnificence in a large orangery, then a hunt in the preserves of the estate, then a concert at which the principal singers of the opera and of the Opéra-Comique were heard, and then a ball on the lawn. Lady Holland gained universal liking through her lovable disposition and her dignified deportment. She proved herself in every sense a great lady. Her reserve, tempered with kindliness, contrasted strikingly with the animation and mirth of the young women who surrounded her and showered the attention upon her she so well deserved. Of the many ladies of the party there were the Princess Dolgorouki and Mme. Diwoff, two very fashionable Russians; the superb Mme. Visconti, the particular friend of General Alexander Berthier, who for a long time entertained a strong passion for her; little Mme. Marmont; the Marchioness de Lucchesini, the Prussian envoy's wife, and a number of others whom I must leave unmentioned. Mme. Visconti, Mme. Marmont, and Mme. de Lucchesini followed the chase on horseback. Princess Dolgorouki, who was much attached to the French capital, was an intimate friend of Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, the famous painter,—who made a portrait of her,—and was one of the most beautiful

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ELIZABETH, LADY HOLLAND

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women of her day. Although she was then nearly fifty, she was still very handsome. Potemkin, long a favourite of Catherine the Great, had once, so gossip said, been consumed for the charms of the princess with an ardent flame to which she had been unresponsive. This only by the way. As for distinguished men, besides Fox and Lord Holland, there were Erskine, Adair, General Fitzpatrick, the Marquis de Lucchesini, Generals Moreau, Berthier, Lannes, Marmont, Junot, Prince Dolgorouki, M. de la Harpe, and M. de Narbonne.

Moreau and Fox, glad to find themselves in each other's company, conversed at great length. The general felt flattered by the good opinion the English had of him. He talked freely with Fox, telling him about his campaigns, and shaking off his usual diffidence and reserve. He even was complimented upon "telling the story of his campaigns with the same skill with which he won them."

So much for the brilliant gathering at Raincy.

Bonaparte had a supreme contempt for money in itself. At the first official meeting of the provisional consuls, Siéyès went mysteriously to the door to see if nobody was within hearing. Then coming back to his colleague, he pleasantly observed to him, as he pointed to a chest of drawers:

"Do you see that fine piece of furniture? You probably do not suspect its value?"

"It is an historical article," said Bonaparte. "Was it used by Louis XVI.?"

"That is not it at all," replied Siéyès. "I will tell you what I mean. It contains eight hundred thousand francs! When we were directors we thought it quite likely that one of us might have to go back into private life without a farthing, which would have been most unsatisfactory. We therefore invented this little savings-box, from which every one of us who retired would draw something. Now

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that there are no directors left, here we are—owners of all this money! What shall we do with it?"

Bonaparte, seeing through his associate's idea, answered:

"If information reaches me of this, the money will go into the public treasury. But while I am not informed of it, and consequently have no knowledge of it, you and Ducos, who have been directors, can divide it between you. Only, I advise you to lose no time, for to-morrow it may be too late."

Enough said, thought his two colleagues. Siéyès kept six hundred thousand francs for himself, and sent only two hundred thousand to poor Ducos, who grumbled at this unfair division. He wanted to complain to the first consul, who however stopped him short.

"Arrange it between yourselves," said he, "because if the affair is reported to me you will be obliged to give all the money up."

When I left Moreau I assumed the name of Saint-Elme, which I have kept ever since. To this name I prefixed that of Ida, of which my father had always been fond. So I forever quitted my respectable family name, which now remains unconnected with any of the events of my troublous and adventurous career.

I secured the furniture I had left at Chaillot, took a fine apartment, and began to keep house on a brilliant and extravagant scale. Being so foolish in every respect, was it likely that I should avoid recklessness and extravagance? My clothes especially cost me large sums. The dress worn at the close of the Directory was usually a very long muslin or cotton tunic, trimmed with bands of embroidered cloth—silk being then quite out of favour, —and secured by a girdle at the bosom. This tunic, which covered the form without concealing it, showed its every perfection at the slightest movement of the body. A shawl thrown loosely about the neck completed

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this costume,—this most graceful costume I may add,—which I have never heard criticised by any well-shaped woman, and which was only called indecent by those whose objections to it were founded on motives having nothing to do with modesty. The headdress and footgear were imitations of the fashion in vogue during the Augustan era. A purple net supported the hair at the back; in front it was kept in place by a golden circlet adorned with cameos. On the feet were sandals bound on by purple ligatures, between the spaces of which the leg—clad in flesh-coloured tights—was visible; rings were worn on the toes; the shoulders were partly covered by short, divided sleeves, whence the arm protruded at three-quarters length; above the elbow the arm was set off by a broad, gold bracelet, richly bejewelled. Over the tunic which bore a cameo brooch upon the bosom, the wearers of this dress had a purple robe, which they sometimes let flow in the manner of a tragedy queen, or which they otherwise wrapped about them in statue-like folds. Thus did Madame Tallien and her fashionable friends exhibit themselves in the drawing-rooms and at the theatres, in costumes almost identical with those in which Mme. Vestris and Mlle. Raucourt appeared on the stage. After the performance, crowds would gather at the door of the theatre to see these modern Aspasias come out, or "wonderful women" as they were called, and of whom I was one.

I had been enrolled in the company of the Théâtre-Français, was an accepted "student," and was sure of a start. But the real difficulties yet lay before me. In order to overcome them hard work was to be done. I must confess, to my shame however, that I did very little work indeed. Trusting to my excellent memory I took no serious pains in learning anything by heart. But I was aware that it might be useful to me to know the minister of home affairs, who as such had jurisdiction

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over the theatres. The minister, Lucien Bonaparte, treated me kindly, and, later on, informally. He was a clever man. Only, I thought the expression of his face haughty and disagreeable, even when he was endeavouring to be pleasant. In the evenings he held receptions at his official residence. There was music and walking in the garden, and blindman's buff. Sometimes there were half-a-dozen women and Lucien alone with one male friend. These parties I found queer rather than amusing, and avoided them as far as I was able without giving offence.

When Lucien was sent to Spain as ambassador, M. Chaptal took his place. His newly appointed excellency, instead of cutting his predecessor's patronage short, was good enough to continue it. He settled a date for my first appearance and had a liberal sum paid me to meet the expenses of my theatrical wardrobe. Even before taking up his abode in the ministerial mansion, M. Chaptal did me the honour of inviting me to give a duologue with Lafont at his house. Imagine the applause of a roomful of people under the incentive of a new minister's approval! I really succeeded very well on this occasion.

I always remained grateful to M. Chaptal for his goodness to me. After he had given up his minister's post,—upon his own desire,—in which he was succeeded by Champagny, the French ambassador at Vienna, I paid him several visits, which he seemed to appreciate warmly. Official letters of resignation rarely give the true motive that underlie them. Chaptal gave as a reason for retiring his wish to resume his pursuit of industrial chemistry. As a fact, Napoleon had purposely humiliated his minister in a flagrant manner, no one ever knew why. An actress of the Théâtre-Français was involved. M. Chaptal had for some time entertained relations of intimacy with Mlle. Bourgoing, who belonged to that theatre, and for whom

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LUCIEN BONAPARTE

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his attachment was deep and sincere. One night M. Chaptal was at work with Napoleon, when suddenly Mlle. Bourgoing was announced, who had been summoned by Bonaparte. 'Twas a pre-arranged dramatic stroke. M. Chaptal at once thrust his papers into his portfolio, and went away. The same night he sent Napoleon his resignation, which was promptly accepted, Chaptal being at the same time created a senator.

From time to time I also went to visit M. de Talleyrand. One day, as I was leaving his house, I was accosted by M. Mathieu de Montmorency, who poured out his regrets at not having seen me for so long.

"But, Sir," I said, "I have not the privilege of your acquaintance.",

"How can anyone who has once seen Mme. Moreau ever forget her?"

I attempted to put a stop to further deferential compliments by telling him that the name he was bestowing on me was not mine. I informed him that I only laid claim to the more modest title of a student at the Théâtre-Français. This statement seemed to make M. de Montmorency think his position on the carriage step too respectful. He jumped into the carriage without further ado, and sat down beside me.

"Where do you expect to be taken to, Sir?" I asked indignantly.

"Oh, to your house, I hope, lovely lady!"

I invited him to get out immediately, in a tone that brooked no reply. He appeared to be surprised, and got out without saying a word, rather crestfallen, to say truth. He had the good grace, at any rate, to bear me no malice because of the blow at his vanity. He was present in a stage-box at my first appeareance, and applauded me. But when I remember how this young scapegrace was afterwards one of the strongest pillars of monarchy and the church and a champion of high morality, I cannot refrain from smiling.

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The day of my first appearance was at length announced and hastily at that, against the advice of Dugazon and in the face of the adverse opinion of Monvel and my instructor in declamation. The egregious flatteries of my friends caused me to commit the added error of choosing the part of Dido, in which, they said, my physical qualities would show to great advantage, my lower limbs being especially praised as artistically perfect. My dress was designed by a person of great taste, and was made without regard to cost. I was in the seventh heaven of delight.

The actors were extremely obliging and prophesied me success. Nevertheless, when the date of my first appearance on the stage had been actually and irrevocably decreed by order of M. Chaptal, the minister of home affairs, I thought I observed a certain coolness and frigid civility towards me among my colleagues. I was ignorant of the usages of the Théâtre-Français, and M. Mahérault, the commissary of the Republic, informed me that there were some formal calls to be absolved. I was admitted only by Talma, Monvel, Dugazon, Dazincourt, Molé, Mlle. Fleury and Mlle. Mézéray. The iciness of the rehearsals had somewhat disenchanted me.

The fatal hour drew near. The night before the performance I asked my friends not to come to see me until it should be over. But some of them disregarded my request, and lauded my costume; tunic, scarf, quiver, crown, and everything else they admired beyond measure. They were so insistent that when the signal of three knocks was given for the curtain to go up, I heard it without dismay, and walked fully at ease into the wings through two lines of inquisitive onlookers. But as soon as Lafont reached the lines preceding my entry, I began to feel the ground give way under me.

I went on. A triple round of applause greeted me, and, far from encouraging me, put me completely out of countenance. It was all over!

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I had, as the common saying goes, lost my head.

I became aware of that very quickly. My reply to Iarbe was delivered in a dull, monotonous tone, which sounded all the worse by contrast to Lafont's sonorous speaking of the verses. The reader will perceive that I am judging myself without prejudice. The scene appeared to last through all eternity. Although Æneas is a poor part, Damas put so much feeling into it that he roused me to such a degree that in a dialogue with him I was three times unanimously applauded. One emotion succeeded another in my breast, and my heart beat to bursting. Then I realized how rash I had been to select such a part for a first appearance. This was made more cruelly plain to me by the hisses that came from the audience in the scene with my "companion." The consummation of my agony was at hand. The public thought I died very well, as I fell into the arms of Elisa in a real faint. She, a much less robust individual than Dido, would have succumbed to my weight had not the curtain descended in time to save us both. I was carried to my room, and everyone crowded in to make solicitous enquiries.

"It is a conspiracy," some of them said.

"Perhaps it is," I replied, "but I certainly acted badly."

Meanwhile the unhappy Dido was being undressed. As one by one my splendours were taken off me, I felt a succession of shocks to my pride, which was indeed suffering terribly.

At home some friends met me for supper. Among them were Regnault and a nephew of Admiral Gantheaume. This young man was furious, and swore that I was the victim of an actors' cabal, which was true to some extent. But in spite of all the supper was very gay. My friends wanted me to continue the engagement by playing the parts of Semiramis and Hermione. They spared me neither compliments nor consolation, but the

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lesson had been so severe that for once I obeyed the voice of reason. Nothing could induce me to set foot on the boards of the Théâtre-Français again. I saw M. Chaptal more than once after the fatal night, but there was no question between us of dramatic backslidings. I even begged all of the artists of the theatre with whom I was still on terms of acquaintance to consider me quite resigned and comforted, and, above all, not to think I had the least desire to appeal from my first failure. Upon which they all became most amiable again, pouring protestations upon me of their sincere friendship and their warm sympathy.

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CHAPTER VIII

NEY'S PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE DURING THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1800 — MOREAU'S DISLIKE FOR NEY — FURTHER THEATRICAL VENTURE IN THE PROVINCES — DEATH OF KLEBER — HIS CAUSTIC NOTES UPON BONAPARTE — REMINISCENCE OF VALMY — DEATH OF VAN M—— —A THEATRICAL COMPANY IN PAWN—MOREAU'S HOSTILITY TO THE FIRST CONSUL — BERNADOTTE AND THE "BUTTER-POT CONSPIRACY" — FOUCHE PREVENTS A DUEL BETWEEN BONAPARTE AND MOREAU.

By way of diversion from my sad adventure in the drama, I will mention the glad tidings that I now was receiving as to the army of the Rhine. The first consul had entrusted Moreau with this important command. Under him were Generals Ney, Richepanse, Saint-Cyr. Lecourbe, Grouchy, Decaen—all soldiers of the highest merit and all of proved military efficiency. Moreau had an army of 80,000 splendid troops, who had full confidence in their leaders. They fought in the two glorious campaigns of the spring and winter of the year 1800, famous for the victories at Engen, Moeskirch, Biberach, for the taking of Philipsburg, Elm, and Ingolstadt, and for the final great victory at Hohenlinden.

During these happenings, Michael Ney, who played a conspicuous part in them, wrote occasional letters to his relatives and friends which were shown to me at a later time. Apart from the interest that these letters add to the events they described, they bear the impress of the

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writer's character. There is about them a glow and a dash and a patriotic ardour, there are forcible expressions and a picturesque familiarity, such as do not come from a literary artist but from a soldier writing hastily at a camp fire, in the rather diffusive style then universally in vogue, but still without sacrifice of sound sense and reason. Here is what he writes from headquarters, near Augsburg, in a letter dated May 15, 1800:

"I promised to give you some details about our military operations. But the quick marches and the continual fighting since the fifth of this month have prevented me from keeping my promise. The enemy flies whenever we are near; we have already taken more than 20,000 prisoners. Widespread desertion makes the fearful plight of the Austrians still worse. They are now marching in full retreat upon the Lech. Ulm, which only has a weak garrison, will not be long in surrendering. In fact, our campaign is going off most successfully: soldiers, officers, all are fighting with unexampled tenacity. 'This is the campaign of peace,' they say, 'let us get done with it'! I hope that victory, which is with our arms everywhere, will soon end this horrible struggle and give us peace. I shall then hasten home to enjoy its blessings."

A month later, and four days before the battle of Hochstadt, Ney wrote again from Weissenburg, and I give the following extract from his letter:

"I have just been told by a man who has come to me from the enemy that there are two bridges over the Danube, newly put across it to the south of the abbey of Elchingen, and that a number of Austrian troops are encamped thereabouts. If these gentlemen pay me a visit, they will run upon the point of a sword!"

Five years later the fortunes of war took Marshal Ney back to the same ground, when he won the glorious title of Duke d'Elchingen.

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On the 12th of Messidor, of the year VIII. (July 1st, 1800), we find him excusing himself because of the brevity of his letters:

"The neglectfulness I have shown in my correspondence," he says, "is greatly due to our perpetual marches. General Kray's speedy retreat behind Ratisbon gave us a little time to breathe. Well, there it is, that fine army of 100,000 fighters, which was not only going to invade Alsace, Brabant, and so on, but was going to change our political status entirely. There is that army, I say, reduced to 40,000 runaways not daring to face the Republican phalanxes, which are in rags to be sure, but all full of courage and vigour. The Austrians have already proposed an armistice. Now that we are masters of the whole of Bavaria, we shall force the elector of that country to agree to partial peace. We can then easily afford to accede to an entire suspension of hostilities, after having taken enough country to ensure the army good winter quarters and having got enough money out of it to pay the soldiers and provide them with new coats and breeches, &c."

In a letter written in August of the same year, from his headquarters at Neuburg, on the Danube, Ney gives an opinion on the negotiations in progress with Austria, and is very sceptical about them:

"Everyone believes we are to have peace, but I do not. I am persuaded that England will attempt the impossible to induce the Austrians to make another effort in this campaign. Their false pride is very likely to get the better of them and cause them to make that mistake. It seems difficult to convince these vain people that the French troops will continue to beat them whenever and wherever we attack them. I should recommend them to consider the thing carefully, to let us go back to the Rhine, and to sign a treaty of peace. Otherwise, we might easily, without much ado, go to Vienna. I would

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gladly give up the rest of my life to fight the execrable English, to compel those tigers whom human nature abhors to acknowledge the power of France, and to give her back what they impudently stole and tore away from her in violation of the rules of war. For I remember that these gentlemen are never as dangerous on the battlefield as when they are engaged in political strife or in criminal attempts to overthrow all social order—so long as it be to the greater glory of their own selves. Ware Pitt! In a short time from now we shall know whether he intends to desist from his high-handed fashion in politics. I must admit, nevertheless, that the man deserves admiration because of his penetrating genius. But that is nothing compared to the evil which this monster has brought upon the whole universe. Pardon my scrawl. I am ill with rheumatic gout. You must see by my language that I am suffering, since I am breathing only war and vengeance in order to forget the state of my wretched, weak body, which is not worth four pence in quiet times."

At long intervals I, too, received messages from Ney. The sight of his handwriting made my heart beat violently. I was delighted at his answering me. His letters, I must avow, were more civil than they were tender, but they exhaled a confidential spirit. In his last letter from the scene of action alluded to above, Ney made mention of an approaching visit to Paris. But the divinities of war ordained otherwise. I wrote to him in my turn, putting all my heart into the answer, which, unlike a certain other letter, reached its intended destination. The winter campaign opened, and Ney became a conspicuous figure in the many battles which culminated in the splendid victory of Hohenlinden.

Moreau, who had forgiven me, and ought to have banished me from his memory, entertained an involuntary dislike for Ney, of my sentiments towards whom he was

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fully aware. He disliked him too in spite of the fact that Ney's valuable military services under his command enhanced his own reputation as a general. Ney once told me how in a serious dispute Moreau had reproached him with his attachment to Napoleon, to which Ney had replied:

"I have always been ready to serve France, the country I love so well. I served her under the Republic and under the Directory. I am serving her under you, General, and I shall serve her under Bonaparte. It is to my country that I am devoted, not to the man who is chosen to govern her."

Growing more and more reckless concerning Ney, I was on the point of turning all my possessions into cash, of taking to my men's clothes, and of rushing off to the army. But gratitude stepped in and interfered with love. The remembrance of Moreau and of his kindness made me shrink from obliging him to witness the public display of a preference which would wound him so deeply. So I did not go, but I allowed my imagination to run riot in fancying the happiness that was to be as great as the delusion, but the short duration of which was to cost me a bitter expiation.

My unfortunate dramatic essay at the Théâtre-Français, barren as it had been, had nevertheless incited some provincial theatrical directors to make me offers. At first their propositions had a humiliating effect upon me. I saw that I had gone down in the scale. But upon further reflection I thought I had best leave Paris for a time with a view to having the Dido episode forgotten. Besides, I liked acting, and travel amused me. I therefore decided to sign a contract with the manager of the largest theatre in Marseilles. Regnault, who at first had shown opposition to this plan, when he saw that my mind was made up gave me letters of introduction to M. de Permon, the commissary-general of police, and to M. Thibeaudeau, the prefect.

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I cannot describe all the sorrowful thoughts, all the painful recollections, all the biting regrets I felt upon finding myself once more in Lyons, where, a few years before, I had lived in such happy and comfortable circumstances under a respected name.

Arrived at Marseilles, I at once settled down in the hotel I first came to. In a very short space of time I had chosen a fine apartment, had arranged for my meals, and had selected a maid. The landlady was most accommodating and almost disinterested—in spite of her calling.

I went to see M. Permon, who greeted me in the most charming and gallant manner. Then the days were fixed upon which I was to appear. They were very convenient, thanks to the amiable counsels of the noted singer Rousselois, a woman who had the right sense of the truly beautiful and of tragic dignity, and who proved her friendship towards me by trying to correct my vagaries. Her advice went a great deal further than theatrical matters. She would sometimes say to me:

"In the freedom of our profession, which does not bring us wealth to shield ourselves behind, we must take some care of our reputation."

After which she would scold me for going about so much, for all my driving and walking out, for being seen so often in public places and in society. Each time that she talked to me I concurred with her view. Yet—how was I to resist all those invitations? And, still more, how was I to resist my own character?

During my sojourn at Marseilles I underwent the sorrow of seeing the mortal remains of General Kléber arrive from Egypt in a lead coffin. He had been murdered in Cairo by a Moslem fanatic. I had been well acquainted with the general before he went away to Egypt, when he was living with Moreau. Kléber was a brave and clever officer. But, like his friend Moreau,

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GENERAL KLÉBER
(*From an Oil Portrait by Ansiaux*)

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he had an uncertain character which assorted strangely with his commanding figure. By nature he was a thoroughgoing rebel, himself declaring that he hated discipline. His mind, though agreeably cultivated, was rather dull, and mediocre in capability. After the departure of Bonaparte from Egypt, Kléber's generalship proved inferior to the army's expectations. Instead of taking real action, he reviled Bonaparte. Dalas, Kléber's aide-de-camp, who brought back the general's body and his papers from Egypt, was a friend of mine. I had occasion to see him and talk with him at the hotel he stayed at, where I too was residing. He told me much in reference to Kléber, and communicated some items to me from the general's notebook, in which Napoleon was criticised with unsparing severity. Here are a few of these extracts which have hitherto never been published:

. . . . . .

"I am finishing the first book of my 'Memoirs Relating to the Vendée'. Bonaparte keeps me in idleness. I was to have been commander-in-chief of the Syrian expedition. But Bonaparte, who never hands over anything to anyone unless circumstances forbid his doing it himself, finally concluded to take command in person, falsely alleging that I was in an unfit state of health."

. . . . . .

"Bonaparte says: 'Clever people are not wanted in an army.' He ought to be quite as afraid of sensible people."

. . . . . .

"Is Bonaparte liked? How could he be? He likes no one. But he fancies he can make up for it through the tools he creates by advances and gifts."

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"Is he bad? No. But that is because vice comes from asininity. And he is not an ass."

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"Well—what then is his great quality? For, after all, he is an extraordinary man. It is to dare and then dare more. In this art he goes beyond temerity itself."

. . . . . .

I shall say nothing of the performances at Marseilles excepting that they were successful. I acquitted myself admirably in several tragic rôles, among them those of Semiramis and Heloïse. I remained at Marseilles for several months, after which I went with my colleagues to act at Draguignan and Digne.

While I was at Draguignan a little incident occurred upon which I took back with great pleasure. My manager, myself, and the rest of our company were all dining together at the inn where we had taken lodgings. The manager was in good humour. He had been an actor in one of the chief Parisian theatres, was still a handsome man, and was fond of relating his experiences. That evening he was giving full vent to his passion for story-telling. But leaving the moral of his tale until the last, he said that all his adventures had ended in a happy marriage—just like the plays on the stage. We went into the next room to take coffee, and there I found myself the object of the attentions of an officer of constabulary, whose solicitude caused me more anxiety than pleasure. I was more dismayed than ever when this obtrusive individual came over to our table, and without ceremony took a seat there. The officer joined in our conversation, and soon began to talk of battles and campaigns. The name of Valmy escaped him. I started as if I had received an electric shock.

"You were there, then?" I asked him.

"Ten yards away from yourself, Madam, when the brave Drouot was being carried off the field."

Everyone exclaimed:

"What, is it possible! You were there! You were fighting?"

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"I saw the lady," said Jarlot—which was the officer's name,—"giving a flask and a handkerchief to a wounded sub-lieutenant who had just been struck by a bullet, and she was not in the least afraid. Yes, Madam, I recognize you! One forgets courage no less than one forgets beauty!"

I answered that the reminiscences he brought up made me feel some pride, although I was not entitled to any praise. I also begged him to say nothing more about my past military career, which might do me no credit as an actress. The reward for his secrecy was to be my friendship. To this he delightedly agreed. But the story was out now, and to the end of the tour I was an Armida in the eyes of my colleagues.

A letter from Amsterdam announced the news of my husband's death at Surinam, at the age of thirty-one. Such is the strange composition of the human heart that I was deeply and sincerely grieved, and shed many tears. I left Draguignan my soul full of sadness, resolving to return to Paris.

By the time I had reached Aix I had already become more cheerful as the beneficent result of the journey, and a pleasant meeting furnished another timely distraction. At the hotel I stopped at in Aix I thought to recognize a charming young woman who had once been a bright ornament of the gatherings at General Moreau's and Saint-Jean-d'Angély's. She looked less happy, but not less affable. So I renewed the acquaintance without further ado.

"What!" said I, "is it you, Felix? What are you doing here? Where are you going? Come with me, will you not, I am bound for Paris!"

"Alas! my dear friend—since you are kind enough to treat me as such—I must confess that we cannot stir from this place, and that for good reason. We are in pawn, my company and I,—for I am an actress,—and

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must remain so until the money arrives which the manager of the theatre at Digne is to send us."

"Well, how large a sum would it take to release such a valuable pledge?"

"Oh, here comes our manager, who will tell you exactly how our finances stand."

M. Moiret, a very well-mannered young man, explained with philosophic candour what the present needs and the future hopes of the company were. The appalling deficit amounted to 700 francs! I lent the amount to him at once with so much readiness that he felt emboldened to make a yet more daring proposal:

"Join our company without an engagement! We will give tragedies, comedies, melodramas, farces, operas, and even pantomimes with sham fights!"

"I am with you!"

Felix hugged me on the spot. Moiret indulged in all sorts of extravagant talk. The leading man rubbed his hands at the idea of playing great parts. His wife, who also played large parts, and who was a lanky, forbidding person of thirty, also became quite excited. I invited them all to dinner to begin with. Moiret volunteered to take charge of my luggage, which, he gaily declared, was worth more than the movables of the whole troupe.

When the laughter and the merriment had subsided, I thought to remark a certain air of diffidence about the company, and some mutterings and whisperings. I asked what the meaning was of this. Moiret, assuming a serio-comic tone, acted as spokesman.

"Madam," he said, "you may no doubt be aware that the ancients employed chariots to travel in."

"Well?"

"Well, we should very much like to follow their example in a country that is so full of their relics."

"By which you mean that you want to drive to Digne."

"Ah, how quickly you guess——"

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"And is that all you had to confess? Why, this completes our 'Comical Romance'!"

Through all the ups and downs of life I have always been able to take what came to me with good grace, and to adapt myself to cirucmstances. Thus I manifested no surprise at the appearance of our four-wheeled phæton. It was a large cart with a few upright wooden hoops stretched over with linen—or nearly so. Eleven people crowded into it, for I am not counting the soubrette's parrot, the ingénue's angora cat, and the leading man's pug-dog. It was really a most absurd caravan, and the journey would have seemed highly amusing to any one not inclined to take life so seriously. Between a tirade from "Semiramis" and a grand aria from "Blue Beard" we steered safely into port. Mlle. Felix, M. Moiret, and myself were however loth to make our entrance into Digne in this fashion, and we therefore walked into the town on our feet.

I spent three months at Digne. It may easily be imagined that it had not needed all this time to free me from the last longings to continue my dramatic escapades. But while at Digne I was privileged to meet M. de Lameth, the prefect. It would have been difficult again to find combined such a distinguished mien, such a genial manner, and such refined politeness. M. de Lameth was universally liked. Although he was no longer young, the women still called him "the handsome prefect."

The poor troupe from the Alpine capital did not make a fortune in Digne. It only contrived to subsist through the aid of municipal liberality and the prefect's generosity. As for me, I had declined to accept a salary! All I had stipulated for was a single benefit performance. The day before it was to take place I received another letter from Amsterdam, requesting my presence there. At the same time a letter came from Ney, apprising me of the fact that he was leaving for Paris, where he in-

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tended to make a prolonged stay, and stating that he would be glad to see me. A truce to tears, said I to myself, and made up my mind to go back to the metropolis.

Since my departure Moreau had married Mme. Collot, and had bought from Barras, who had disappeared from the political arena after the 18th of Brumaire, the magnificent estate and mansion of Gros Bois, near Paris. Having returned to the capital after the peace of Amiens was declared, he passed his time partly as a country gentleman, and partly as a townsman at a house in the Rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré, which he had likewise purchased.

Citizen Talleyrand had by a brief from the Pope been released from the sentence of major excommunication, which had been pronounced upon him some time before. He was coincidently released from his religious vows. The ex-Bishop of Autun was restored to lay life, and was allowed to marry without exposure to the thunderbolts of the Church.

Moreau, in the meantime, had openly exhibited his hostility to the government. One day, after a grand dinner which he gave to a number of his friends at Gros Bois, he conferred a kettle of honour upon his cook and a collar of honour upon his dog, in derision of Napoleon's custom of bestowing swords of honour upon his officers as a reward for eminent service. The English newspapers blew the bellows of dissension between Moreau and Napoleon, praising the general's fine qualities as against the "tortuous ways" of the first consul. *The Invisible*, a clandestine royalist paper which circulated in the houses of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, seconded this movement. At the Tuileries Moreau was spoken of as "General Retreat," because of his retreat from the Black Forest, or as the "cloth merchant," because he affected dressing in plain clothes of brown cloth. But it was the

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Concordat which give rise to the final rupture between Moreau and Bonaparte, and the immediate cause of it was Bernadotte.

Bernadotte was one of the fiercest opponents to reconciliation between France and Rome. The future King of Sweden was in command of the army of the West, whose headquarters were at Rennes. He showed pronounced Republican tendencies, which were shared by the troops under him. This was seen plainly enough when the question came up of voting Bonaparte consul for life. Nearly an entire half-brigade—officers and soldiers—of the army of the West voted "No." A pamphlet printed at Rennes, of a very violent character, and said to have been inspired by Bernadotte, was sent from Rennes, his headquarters, to one of Moreau's aides-de-camp at Paris in a basket of Brittany butter. The pamphlet was scarcely less than mutinous. In it Bonaparte was mentioned as a "skull-capped Corsican" and a "Capuchin monk" (in reference to his pact with the Papal See re-establishing public worship), and as "the murderer of Kléber." Several such pamphlets—all marked "To be posted at different post-offices. Private and confidential"—were seized at Dinan, Vannes, and Saint Malo, the police immediately being put upon the trail of the offenders and soon unearthing the real culprits.

Moreau received the pamphlet, read it, and passed it on to his friends.

The first consul then requested Fouché to demand a full explanation from Moreau as to his attitude.

Moreau accorded Bonaparte's emissary an unpleasant reception, refused to give him the least satisfaction, and dismissed him with a joke about "a butter-pot conspiracy."

These details were afterwards made known to me by Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, who added that when

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Bonaparte heard of Moreau's language he went into a violent rage.

"This dispute must cease!" he shouted at Fouché. "France is getting the worst of this—being dragged about between two people! What with him in his position and me in mine, it looks as if I were his chief aide-de-camp! He thinks he can govern the country! We'll see about that!"

Bonaparte then wanted to fight a duel with General Moreau, and Fouché was put up to quiet him and dissuade him from the idea.

All this, besides other things, led up to Bonaparte's election to the life consulship, and two years later, as a sequel to the Cadoudal plot, he became emperor.

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CHAPTER IX

LAST MEETING WITH MOREAU — HE GOES TO AMERICA AFTER THE CADOUDAL PLOT — BEGINNING OF INTIMATE RELATIONS WITH NEY — CHARACTERISTICS OF TALLEYRAND — THOUSAND FRANC BANK-NOTES AS CURL-PAPERS — TALLEYRAND'S STUPID WIFE — NAPOLEON CROWNED KING OF ITALY — THE "CONTEMPORARY" AT MILAN — "FAMA VOLAT" — AMOROUS EPISODE WITH NAPOLEON — HIS WAY WITH WOMEN.

THESE were some of the events which had happened during my absence from Paris, whither I returned from the South about the end of 1803. Before going to Holland, I wanted to obtain from Moreau some family papers I left behind in a drawer at Chaillot. In the early part of February I wrote a line to the general, of whose recent return I had heard. My messages had remained unanswered. As our intimacy had completely ceased long before his marriage, and as the documents in question were indispensable to me, I was angered by this disobliging silence. I took a carriage, and drove to Gros Bois, where Moreau was then living with his wife, intending to present myself before him. But my sense of propriety came to the rescue, and I turned back, contenting myself with writing another note. To this I received a speedy reply. Moreau asked me to meet him in the Boulevard Madeleine. I went. He did not come until I had been waiting half an hour. I found him con-

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siderably aged and much changed. He handed me my papers, and then we walked for a long time in spite of the cold. He could talk of nothing but a multitude of mishaps and annoyances. I was deeply affected by his melancholy and his state of hopelessness. During the interview he compelled me to accept a small pocket-book. I wanted to open it, but he would not allow me to. He told me I must keep it, adding that I might give it back at some future time. He gave me the best of advice, urging me to become reconciled with my family, and so on. I did not see Moreau again.

Knowing that Ney was not yet in Paris, I left the next day for Holland. I arrived safely at Delft, where I had some matters to settle, and where I therefore stayed a few days before proceeding to Amsterdam. I arranged my personal affairs with the greatest expedition possible. My family would only consent to see me on certain conditions, to which I was however unwilling to subscribe. I signed everything that was put before me. I was given twelve thousand florins, a set of ruby ornaments and a casket containing four thousand *louis* in exchange for surrendering my pretensions to all future inheritances. My relatives repudiated me formally. May the responsibility of it fall on them!

It was on the return journey from Holland, at Antwerp, that the news came to my ears of the conspiracy to reinstate the Bourbon dynasty, and of Moreau's arrest. A statement from the Minister of Justice in the *Moniteur* newspaper revealed to France that English spies had surreptitiously landed in the country. At Paris they were busy concocting schemes against the government and the first magistrate. Pichegru and Cadoudal were apprehended on the 7th of February and the 9th of March respectively, Moreau having been imprisoned on the 25th of January, 1804.

I was deeply shocked, and during Moreau's trial wrote

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twice for particulars to Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, whom the first consul had commissioned, with Miot, to examine Moreau's notebooks. Regnault would not see me, and sent word to say that the best counsel he could give me was that I should leave Paris. I saw none of the general's friends, and all I learnt of the unfortunate trial was from the newspapers. In them I read of Pichegru's suicide in prison. But I felt reassured when I found out that the general's life was safe, and hoped he would be as happy as one can be in exile. Moreau asked to be allowed to go to America. The first consul immediately granted the request.

Moreau owned real estate in France difficult to dispose of. The first consul bought his land at Gros Bois from him, and sold it to General Berthier, Moreau asking the same price for it which he had originally paid Barras. The first consul also purchased the house in the Rue d'Anjou, which he gave to Bernadotte. Moreau left prison after bidding his family farewell, was taken to Barcelona, and there embarked for the United States.

The result of Cadoudal's conspiracy was clearly stated in his own words at the conclusion of his trial, when he said:

"We have done more than we tried to do. We wanted to give France a king, we are giving her an emperor."

Having a great deal of money at my command, and feeling depressed in consequence of the isolated life I had of late been leading, I began travelling again, stopping at such towns as Nantes, Bordeaux, and Tours. These journeyings were not for pleasure, and not for any object but that of seeing the country. I spent my money without keeping count. Never having had to deny myself anything, what did I know of thrift or economy?

Not long after my return to Paris, a letter came from Ney, telling me he would soon arrive, and would then come to see me.

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I profited by the time still before me to make ready a place worthy of my hero. In three days I was established in the Rue de Babylone, in a charming little retreat, very comfortable, its small size notwithstanding. A shady garden was attached to it. Nevertheless I had qualms of anxiety. What if my conquering hero should not like me?

I had only had a few letters from Ney. They had all been quite short, but I read and re-read them. The language was not impassioned, yet was soft enough and amiable enough in places to make me feel encouraged. Gallantry so often has a perilous resemblance to love! To his last note I replied with one that surely was the clumsiest and stupidest I ever penned in my life. When one is really in love, one is not at all clever.

The day on which I expected his visit seemed endless. All the morning I walked about the house, looked out of the windows, posed before the mirrors. At last I thought I heard a carriage. A cabriolet rolls noisily up to the door, stops, and a minute later the door opens.

My hero stands before me.

Had Ney been an ordinary man, he might almost have been thought ugly. Yet what with his noble stature, his demeanour, his virile gaze, and his fame—he seemed handsome. But a few words had passed between us and embarrassment had already quitted us both. We were as much at ease as if we had known one another for twenty years.

Too honest and open to shrink from a duty or the obligation of an avowal, Ney did not hide from me Napoleon's project of his union with a beautiful young woman who was a friend of Hortense. Since it denoted such high integrity, I was glad to hear the idol of my heart speak of his marriage, although it would separate me from him. After his frank confession, I feared I should give Ney an unfavourable impression of my

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MARSHAL NEY
(From the Painting by Langlois)

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character by asking him to come again. But he made me very happy by pointing out to me that as yet he was free.

He came again the next day, and on that occasion told me much about his military career. We drifted into relations warmer than those usually called fraternal. He asked me a thousand questions about my past life, about my present existence, about my views of the stage. He listened attentively to all my replies. Suddenly he exclaimed.

"What a pity that you are an actress! I would rather see you a canteen-woman!"

"A canteen-woman! Why, that would suit me excellently, for it would enable me to see you constantly."

He burst out laughing at this pleasant suggestion.

"No," said he, "neither would that life be suitable to you."

He then explained to me that canteen-women must be ill-favoured, which was not the case with me, adding that in the army not even ugliness was a preservative of virtue. On this subject he told me some amusing anecdotes, which, to bear repetition, would require his jovial military style.

The hour of separation came all too soon.

"Goodbye, dear one whom I have met too late!" he said. "My sincere friendship is yours. We may never see each other again. But you shall hear from me."

He took from his breast a watch and the chain belonging to it, and gave them to me. I said to him:

"You have worn it, and your name is engraved upon it, and therefore I take it. Oh! that it was not pointing to the hour of a perhaps eternal farewell."

But that farewell, which honour decreed, proved not to be, after all, a farewell for ever, though it was earnestly believed to be so.

Before taking, so to speak, to my military wings, and

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pursuing the account of my wandering life, I must dwell on a few reminiscences which, did I not record them now, would be swept away in the tide of time and my misfortunes, not thereafter to be remembered.

I have previously spoken of M. de Talleyrand. He was one of the men who left the most lasting traces upon my volatile mind. At the time to which I am now referring there was not a vestige in M. de Talleyrand of his former episcopal station but his manner of wearing his hair. As Gaudin, asterwards the Duke de Gaeta, once remarked, "I went through the Revolution with my wig on," so it might be said that the Bishop of Autun had nothing left of the Church and the Ancient System but his powder and his good manners. The veiled look of his eyes, which were nevertheless most penetrating, gave him a singular expression. One of the principal charms of M. de Talleyrand with those who were privileged to know him was, on the one side, the apparent lightness, the careless indifference he showed in important matters, and, on the other side, his wrapt attention in listening to the most trivial conversation. His cleverness in speech might have been exceeded, but not that of his reticences. Talleyrand, who talked little and with an indolent air, never lost his individuality in conversation, though he kept it in check with consummate politeness.

I rarely went to the ministerial office of foreign affairs without spending two or more hours there. My hair especially attracted the gracious admiration of M. de Talleyrand. One day it was the subject of a novel kind of activity on his part, when, after toying with my blonde locks, he had reduced them to a state of extreme untidiness. The hand that was wont to sign treaties for France at last vouchsafed to still the rebellious indignation which my disordered toilet had summoned up by treating myself as a power whose friendship had

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to be bought back. Here, then, was the French minister of foreign affairs, seizing my tresses one by one, and rolling them up in thin pieces of paper which he took out of a drawer. He arranged my hair under my hat, begging me to leave it as it was until I reached home, where I should arrive, he said, with it looking less beautiful than before he had tumbled it. I pushed my patience as far as he had his gallantry, when perceiving that he had been using thousand-franc bank notes as curl-papers, I held out to him one tuft of my hair after another, exclaiming each time:

"Here is one more, your Excellency!"

My candour towards my readers entitles me to their credence. They may believe me when I say that in this instance no interested motives may be imputed to me. It was too late to resent the stratagem employed by M. de Talleyrand; refusal would have been tantamount to ingratitude; it would also have been an exhibition of ill-humour unfelt by my flattered vanity. And since the minister's present was not the reward for any weakness of mine, I thought in fact that it was to my credit to keep something that I had not been put to the shame of earning.

M. de Talleyrand was at this time paying steady court to Mme. Grand, a handsome East Indian creole, the daughter of a Pondicherry ship's captain, whose acquaintance he had made after his release from exile, and whom he had then married. She was as much renowned for her silly simplicity as for her beauty. The ridiculous things she said would fill a book. I saw Mme. Grand often. She had lovely fair hair, lovely blue eyes, and all the lovely qualities desirable to anyone favouring mental vacuity.

I have reason to doubt that Talleyrand ever took a mistress or his wife into his confidence, or that he ever divided political secrets with anybody whomsoever. Re-

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garding his attitude to my sex, I have always thought him to resemble Bonaparte somewhat. Women might give him pleasure without occupying his mind, and he was able to get everything from them he wanted without further trouble than a moment's love-making.

Bonaparte, first consul, nominated hereditary emperor of the French, with the title of Napoleon I. in the month of May, 1804, by the votes of the Tribunate and the Senate, ratified by three and a half millions of electors, the following year witnessed the arrival, in Paris, of the delegates from the electoral colleges and constituent bodies of the Italian Republic, who came to lay the allegiance of their nation at the emperor's feet, and to proclaim Napoleon King of Italy.

The emperor left Paris on the first of April with the empress, to go to Milan to be crowned. The festivities promised to be very brilliant. I quickly made up my mind to attend them. I was on excellent terms with Count Philip Strozzi, had never relinquished my correspondence with him. I informed him of my wish to be present at the coronation. He answered that I might count upon a pleasant stay in Milan.

Before departing to the French capital, I repaired to the Tuileries to see the grand marshal of the palace, Duroc, whom I knew, and to ask him for a letter of introduction. He received me with great affability,—which was not his strongest quality,—indulged in a few pleasantries about my admiration for heroes, and inquired about Ney. He gave me the letter I had come for, and then asked me if I knew many people in Milan.

"When I was there with General Moreau, as his wife," I replied, "all the grandees of the place were proud of being counted among my friends. Now I shall go alone, depending on my own merits—which then were said to be beyond compare. I cannot say yet whether I have many friends left in Milan. To tell the truth I expect the worst."

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I had not been mistaken as to the reception I had anticipated at Milan. Most of the people had forgotten me. But this troubled me very little; I still found a few friends. I took a large apartment. In the same house a noted tragic actress of extraordinary ability was living, Mme. Pelandi. Thus I came to know the theatrical world of Milan, and was invited to all their entertainments. They persuaded me to take a part in the prologue of a festival play entitled "Fame Flies." It began with the words *Fama volat*, and consisted of fifty lines of bad Italian verse eulogizing the emperor, which I recited, impersonating the goddess of Fame and crowning a bust of Napoleon with a laurel wreath. I showed to good advantage in my classical costume, to which no doubt my success in this rôle may be ascribed. I was vehemently applauded.

After the performance I was to take part in a grand supper. About to change my dress, I was surprised at receiving a note from Duroc asking me to go to the royal palace with some one who would come for me. Although having no ambitious plans to further, I will allow that I bestowed especial care upon my personal appearance. Arrived at the palace, the grand marshal congratulated me, and assured me that the master of the house was well disposed toward me.

"I need not tell you," he said, "how to address the emperor. But let me give you a piece of serious advice, which is not to be frightened if he mentions Moreau."

"Frightened!" I exclaimed, "never fear! But if he says anything about Moreau or Ney, goodbye to His Majesty."

"Don't be rebellious. Simply be agreeable—which will be very easy to you. You will thank me for my advice."

A door I had not noticed was just then thrown open, and I found myself in a study twenty feet square with the Emperor Napoleon, the monarch for whom the world

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was too small. At first he neither bowed nor acknowledged my presence. Then, stepping up toward me, he observed:

"Do you know that you look several years younger here than on the stage?"

"I am happy to hear it."

"You used to be very intimate with Moreau?"

"Very intimate."

"He did some foolish things for your sake!"

To this I made no answer. The emperor then came close to me, and we talked more freely still. He was very engaging, sufficiently so, at least, to make me forget Moreau for the emperor-king; his compliments were blunt rather than sentimental. It was easy to see that women could exercise little power over Napoleon.

He seemed to know some details of my strange career, and asked me if I belonged to the Milanese theatre and if I intended to stay there. I replied that after the ceremonies were over I proposed to travel in the Tyrol. He looked at me with eyes so piercing that one might have thought that he saw through and through me, at the same time asking the question:

"Are you German, then?"

"No, Your Majesty. I was born in Italy, and I have a French heart."

He gave me another glance, seemed to hesitate for a minute or two, and then remarked with royal condescension:

"I may do something for you."

After dispensing this veritable petitioner's sop he vanished. I was escorted home by the officer who brought me, and who plied me with questions as to the interview.

Once more alone, I underwent a double sensation of pride and humiliation. I was proud at having attracted Napoleon's attention, and felt humiliated because I had not been able to resist the fascination of Moreau's enemy,

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who inhabited the same house that nine years before I had lived in with the general, enjoying the universal respect due to a legitimate spouse.

The next day the grand marshal called upon me. He surprised me less by the magnificent gift he brought me on the emperor's behalf than by a second invitation to the palace. I wanted to refuse the gift, to which I did not believe myself entitled. But Duroc gave me such cogent reasons for accepting it that I at length complied, enquiring from him whether I ought to thank the emperor.

So I went to the palace again that evening, as I had been commanded. Only on this occasion I had much longer to wait. The grand marshal escorted me into a very spacious room, which bore more resemblance to a minister's office than to a royal study. The emperor was seated at a desk, signing an enormous bundle of despatches. He looked up for a moment merely, as we came in, immediately resuming his work. The grand marshal signed to me to sit down, and himself withdrew. More than a quarter of an hour elapsed before the emperor seemed to remember my presence. Suddenly, turning about without dropping his pen, he remarked:

"Are you tired of waiting?"

"That would be impossible, Your Majesty."

"How impossible?"

"Am I not witnessing the labours of a great man? Is that not the most interesting sight imaginable?"

Hereupon I rose. He did likewise, and came over to me in a much friendlier manner than the day before. Of a sudden he cast his eye down upon a corner of his desk, crossed the room, and pulled the bell-rope. A Mameluke at once appeared in the door opposite that by which I had entered. I was so startled at his appearance that I fell back into my chair. He fastened his eyes upon me in a terrifying manner. He handed a parcel of letters

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to his master, who took them from him in silence, and laid them on his desk. The Mameluke left the room.

The emperor then came towards me once more. His eyes expressed far more of Italian ardour than imperial dignity. I gave not a thought to etiquette, and he was affability itself. Our friendly interview spun itself out—both of us unwitting—until two o'clock in the morning.

"Do you never sleep?" I asked him.

"As little as possible. Whatever is taken from sleep is added to real life."

In speaking of such a remarkable man, the slightest reminiscences seem important. I may therefore be pardoned for giving a few more details.

Napoleon's roughness has been much declaimed against, it being alleged to have been almost savage. This is sheer calumny. Certainly he was no foppish ladies' man. But his gallantry, for the very reason that it was not commonplace, was all the more acceptable. He pleased you because he was sincere. He would not tell a woman outright that she was beautiful, but would describe her with the touch of an artist.

"Would you believe it," he acknowledged smilingly, "that when I saw you on the stage I suspected your good looks might be partly contraband?"

It has also been stated that his skin had the hue and other unpleasant peculiarities of that of coloured people. Those who have seen him from close proximity will join with me in denying this report. Nor did the emperor at all resemble the slim, frail-looking General Bonaparte. His face had gained in nobility of expression, which was, however, as simple as ever. His eye was incredibly sharp and piercing, and the fine lines of his profile recalled the Cæsarean model. His hands, which have been much praised, justly merited their reputation. I commented upon their whiteness, and he thanked me with a smile

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almost like a pretty woman's—such is the childish vanity of even the greatest characters on some personal matter. I may here confess to a change of opinion, experienced by many others at that time. Dating from my interviews with Napoleon, I never thought of him excepting as the greatest man of his age. My enthusiasm for him was thenceforth unbounded.

I have omitted to say that when I thanked the emperor for the magnificent present he had sent me, he answered:

"I will remember you. We will *do more!*"

He kept his word. Three years later, Regnault de Saint-d'Angély submitted to him for signature my appointment at the court of Tuscany with Princess Elisa Bacciochi. The emperor said: "Why, this is our 'Fama volat'! Of course I authorize it!" And this consent gained me the approval and kindness of Napoleon's sister.

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CHAPTER X

JOURNEY TO INNSBRUCK—MEETING THERE WITH NEY — GARDANE, GOVERNOR OF THE PAGES — DERY, A CHIVALROUS ESCORT — THE CAMPAIGN OF 1806 — THE BATTLE OF EYLAU — IN WHICH THE "CONTEMPORARY" RIDES IN A CAVALRY CHARGE — AND IS WOUNDED — INTERVIEW WITH NEY AFTER THE BATTLE — ITS COST TO FRANCE — THE "RED LION"—RETURN TO PARIS.

I LEFT Milan towards the close of the year 1805. I stayed a few days in Verona on my way to the Tyrol. At Verona I engaged an Italian servant, a sort of courier and steward in one, and I also bought two fine horses. Dressed up as a man, with my luggage reduced to a single portmanteau, I thus set out upon the journey to the Tyrol as though I were making an excursion to Vincennes. My desire to see Ney again was not unmingled with regrets, which were not unconnected with the memory of the emperor. It was all very well to tell myself that, being tied to Ney by no other bond but that of friendship, I had been guilty of no transgression, and therefore need not reproach myself; my conscience troubled me nevertheless. So I went after Ney like a schoolboy, without his expecting me. I visited the whole of the Tyrol in this manner, gradually drawing nearer and nearer to the headquarters of the army commanded by him who, in spite of his marshal's staff and his duke's title, was always Michael Ney to me. My journey ended at Innsbruck, which I reached by way of Botzen. When I arrived at the capital of the

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Tyrol it was resounding with the shouts of victory of the brave Frenchmen. Innsbruck was almost like a French town where recruits were being gathered. By dint of a few German phrases I managed to secure very agreeable lodgings next door to the celebrated mineralogist Schlasser, whose study I visited equipped with a little second-hand learning, which however stood me in good stead. I found Ney in the midst of a resplendent staff. He had discovered in the arsenal at Innsbruck the standards of the Seventy-sixth Regiment, lost in the Grisons campaign; at this the regiment was overjoyed. His immediate smile showed me that he had recognized me, and that he was not annoyed by my presence.

In the evening he came to see me. My hair was cut short, and the sun had browned my skin. In fact I had such a masculine air that Ney said to me:

"If you did not speak I would defy anyone to guess you were a woman, especially if you were on horseback."

I had an actual experience of the kind at the defence of Cattaro, where General Dezons was in command. Seeing me treating a number of soldiers to brandy who were collected about the canteen-woman—an approved copy of the heroine sung by our Béranger—the general made the enquiry:

"Who is that young man, that little man over there?"

"General," replied the military Hebe, "he is a Parisian who wants to be a soldier-apprentice. He is paying liberally for his initiation, but he does not drink himself."

Ney asked me if I was not tired of my wandering life. A woman, he said, must be of iron to prefer such exertion and fatigues to rest. He went on to remark that, his wish to have me near him notwithstanding, I had best leave the army as soon as possible. I remained at Innsbruck a few days only, Ney promising to come and see me in Paris after the war.

There, accordingly, I received visits from him after the

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Peace of Pressburg, with which his activity in the field was suspended for the time being. I occupied a small apartment in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, never going to the theatre or inviting friends, and leading an altogether quiet but happy existence. Ney's idea was that I should take a place as teacher of languages in one of our great educational institutions founded by Napoleon. In vain I pointed out that my war records would be of little use as academical testimonials. He persisted, while I entertained small hopes of obtaining such a situation, and therefore did not continue to argue.

For the vanquished the treaty of peace signed at Pressburg proved to be no more than an armistice. A fresh coalition was soon in arms against France, consisting of Prussia, Russia, Sweden, and England. In the autumn of 1806 began the campaign against Prussia.

Ney informed me one day that he had been entrusted with the sixth corps of the army which was to fight in Germany. The campaign, he predicted, would be long and severe. In case I wanted to follow him he had commended me to the care of General Gardane, the governor of the pages, who was soon to leave for the front. I had made his acquaintance in Italy. Moreau thought highly of his valour. But his more than blunt manner always repelled me. He was agreeable if he wanted to please you, rough if you did not please him. I did not conceal from Ney that I thought Gardane must be a strange governor for the pages. He answered that Napoleon did not wish to make fops of these young men, but good substantial soldiers.

"Besides," he added, "you are speaking of Gardane the Republican general, and I of Gardane of the court. You will yourself see the difference. We have all changed a little Do you not think I am less harsh? We are all more or less disguised as courtiers. A curious transformation, is it not?"

Ney set forth and I wrote to General Gardane. He

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replied, asking me to present myself at the Tuileries the next day. I found him changed indeed. He had become a marvel of politeness—the last "red-heel" of the Bull's Eye chamber, Apparently he saw no such change in me, for he indulged in gallant speeches of a nature to make me apprehensive of being under his protection during the journey. I hence declined his assistance with all the conventional formality in vogue. One of my friends mentioned another officer to me. His name was Déry, he belonged to a hussar regiment, and was a staid, reliable man. He called upon me, and warned me that after crossing the frontier we could not travel together, since women were not allowed to accompany the troops. But as far as the frontier I might dispose of his services.

I was glad to accept Déry as a travelling companion. During the whole of the journey he behaved with the utmost propriety. Exhibiting none of the ordinary gallantry whose mission it seems to be to make love to every woman, he was satisfied to be merely cordial and friendly. Nothing could have given me greater pleasure. Whenever we would get out of our carriage he would let me jump to the ground alone, as if I had been an aide-de-camp.

"I may appear somewhat unceremonious," he said, "but my devotion to your sex prevents me from attentions to trousers, from languishing after a necktie, or from raving over a cap."

Déry had guessed the name that filled my heart. He had the tact to pretend ignorance, but took pleasure in telling me of Ney's exploits, for which his reputation was great even among a host of heroes. Déry adroitly suggested a sure way of letting the object of my affections know of my whereabouts. But I did not wish to adopt this means. I had promised secrecy, and I intended to preserve it at the risk of all dangers or hardships, even at the risk of being misjudged and compromised. Saddened by the early signs of winter on the road, I merely said

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THE "CONTEMPORARY" DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF
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to my escort that I was afraid of the season on account of the poor soldiers, since the cold would be excessive.

"No!" he said, "they will have no time to feel cold!"

It was proved, alas, that winter was an enemy, the only enemy our armies could not conquer It needed the conspiracy of all the elements to vanquish our dear France, and in this great disaster how many cherished names passed into history! The brave Déry, too, was cut down in the flower of his life, at the battle of the Moskwa, in the fatal Russian expedition, that terrible retaliation for our triumphs.

From the very beginning of the campaign of 1806, Ney played a prominent part in the field. At Jena, coming up at the end of the battle with his cavalry, he compassed the final rout of the Prussian army. He then pursued the enemy, bombarded Magdeburg, and made it capitulate without a siege. The fortress, the bulwark of Prussia, surrendered to Ney with sixteen thousand men, eight hundred cannon, and immense stores of war material. The taking of Magdeburg and Lubeck finished the Prussian campaign proper through the conquest of the hereditary states of the house of Brandenburg.

The theatre of the war was next transferred to Prussian Poland. The French, following up their successes, soon found themselves in the presence of the Russian army, to whose defeat Ney contributed gloriously at the passage of the Vistula, at Mohrungen, where he rescued Bernadotte, who was hard beset by the whole of the Russian forces. And at Koenigsberg Ney cut off General Beningsen's retreat, and forced him to retire behind the Pregel.

I applied to General La Riboisière, to whom I had confided my plans, and who showed me where Marshal Ney's corps was, also assisting me to reach him. At a later time, when I confessed to my friend what valuable services this good artillery general had rendered me, Ney ex-

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pressed great annoyance. He vigorously reiterated his order to me to obey his instructions, which were never to take any one into my confidence.

"Take a courageous and reliable servant," he said. "With him, with money, and with brains, you will require no patronage or help, and can go anywhere."

I had been fortunate enough to find at Magdeburg a capital orderly, a Saxon by name of Hans, who was drawn by a natural bent towards the French. I was thus exonerated from employing a native guide. Hans spoke French with some fluency and was fairly conversant with Polish, which knowledge was most useful to me at the end of my journey, when we reached the seat of war.

As we approached the camp I heard guns booming, and found the road encumbered with wounded men and baggage trains. I learned from the soldiers that the Russians were near, and that Ney was attacking them. Joining this column on its march, at a halt in a village, I asked permission of a surgeon, who had himself been wounded in the discharge of his perilous duties, to distribute some money. He smiled, and advised me to go no further than the village, if I expected to do without his medical aid. I gave a few of the wounded a flask of madeira and one of brandy, for which they thanked me warmly.

We were about to mount our horses again, and leave the ambulance waggons behind, when of a sudden a succession of different troops began to crowd upon us. They all hurtled against each other on a road choked with horses and vans. The march continued over villainous ground. The guns stuck in the mud. We found individual soldiers posted along the route They were dragoons who were acting as signposts for the reinforcements. Everybody was anticipating and preparing for a battle. All were cheerful, impatient to fight, and full of faith in the ability of their commander and the power of their bayonets. The battle of Eylau was impending.

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I passed through the lines with my servant with as much tranquillity as if I had been riding in the Bois de Boulogne. The wretched hamlet of Eylau had been abandoned by its inhabitants, and likewise all the houses for four or five miles round.

The affair opened with a cannon shot. I know not what possessed me, but I headed my horse at a gallop towards the immediate scene of attack. I could clearly make out the order of battle. I saw a division get into motion, supported by thirty pieces of artillery. A general officer fell. The attack became general. The battalions were unable to advance in line. In the twinkling of an eye, without even losing step, the first row fired, and, opening in the middle, to right and left, fell back to the rear, making way for the next row to take its place in front.

The snow was falling in heavy flakes upon the field of slaughter. Hans took me by a side road to the shelter of a ruined hovel. I alighted from horseback, and wanted to despatch my servant to find out how we could get back to the main road and eventually hit upon Ney's corps. Hans obstinately refused to obey, exclaiming: "Dead or alive, I will not leave my *master!*"

A sudden clamour and shouting made us jump into our saddles again. The cuirassiers had made an onslaught on one of the Russian positions, and had been repulsed. The infantry in its turn moved to the attack. Soon the advance became general, and Hans and I fell in behind a squadron of the Montbrun division.

How mistaken are they who, never having witnessed a battle, believe the officers to be less exposed than the men! At Eylau I saw the whole staff of a division charge at the head of it. For a moment the light cavalry was thrown into confusion. But order was immediately restored through the prompt intrepidity of officers of the highest rank. Aides-de-camp galloped hither and thither utterly regardless of danger.

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Deprived of a portion of their artillery, the Russians, after an incredible resistance, began to give way. The French bore down upon them with fury. In the course of the advance I was recognized by Caland, the baggage master of the third corps. He took me under his wing, and, far from scolding me for my rashness, spoke with praise of what he was pleased to call my bravery in the unadorned phraseology of battlefields:

"You're a ——— fine wench!"

I asked Caland if he could tell me anything about Ney.

"He is running after Woronsof's grenadiers. If you want to take supper with him you will have to go rather far to find him."

The fighting had lasted from the morning, and it was now already past three o'clock. I thought I saw the light horse of the imperial guard, and rode towards them to satisfy myself, knowing their colonel, General Lefebvre Desnouettes, quite well. A few moments after these troops were hacking the Russian reserve to pieces in a charge. I had kept my presence of mind to a degree which, when I remember the excitement of that battlefield, surprises me, but which the circumstances and the scene can account for better than I.

The movements of our troops had already left a free space for the ambulance corps to operate in. Our columns suddenly began a fresh advance. My horse bolted. Hans, perceiving this, urged my animal to still greater speed through his own efforts to keep pace with me. The charge was sounded. Our cavalry made one of its usual impetuous dashes. The Russians held their ground valorously and skilfully. I still had the excellent pistols and the light sword given me by Moreau previous to his departure for Kehl. They were virgin weapons, as yet unused in any of my campaigns. This time the fray was so hot that I involuntarily put my sword in guard, not for assault but for defence. And I believe that in spite of this

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precaution I ducked my head more than once at seeing the terrible strokes which were being exchanged all about me. I was so tightly hemmed in that I lost my self-control, imagining myself being trampled under the horses' feet, and by a rapid motion I disengaged my hand. At that moment I received a stab over the left eye that sent the blood gushing over my face. I experienced no pain, but the sight of the blood made me feel faint. Hans at once pressed his horse up to mine, seized my bridle and dragged me out behind.

I remained on my horse for some time, my head wrapped up in a handkerchief and my face considerably swollen. I dismounted near a hillock where I saw an example of the kindness of heart of the French soldiers, so terrible in the fury of battle. On the ground a Russian grenadier lay outstretched, with arms uplifted and murmuring unintelligible things. A young French soldier of the line, wounded in the shoulder, summoned us to help him raise up the Russian, and let him drink from his own flask. The Russian died in his arms.

I called to Hans. Struck by the sound of my voice, the infantryman scrutinized me narrowly, and said:

"You are a woman, are you not?"

"No, comrade!"

"Then you are one of the kind who wear neither beard nor moustaches. Well, you are a good fellow, nevertheless; let us go to the ambulance."

We proceeded with difficulty, for the cold was severe, the darkness intense, and the roads were horrible. In the distance the guns were still growling at intervals. In a wretched village we came upon a tidy cottage where a good man and his wife lavished all the attentions upon me that my state demanded, and the flow of blood from my forehead was staunched.

I found an opportunity to let Ney know of my plight through an artillery colonel of his acquaintance. Three

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disquieting days went by without a message from him. At last a calash came for me, and I forgot all my troubles. I was to see my friend once more. I knew he had been victorious. He had cut the Russians off from Koenigsberg. I felt worthy of his regard since I bore on my face the irrefutable evidence of what I had gone through for the sake of reaching him. I drove by frightful roads, making but a single stop on the way.

It was night when the calash turned into an ample courtyard, and its door was opened by Ney himself. He laid me tenderly down on a couch in a low ceilinged room. Whether it was from happiness, pain, or emotion, I was unable to utter a single word. Ney's voice and his looks told me eloquently enough that himself was deeply moved, although he endeavored to conceal it. After bestowing all the care upon me called for by my condition, Ney, always obedient to duty, told me that we must separate:

"This is the only hour I can devote to you. You must go away, my friend; you must leave the army as soon as you are in a fit state to travel."

The victory of Eylau was dearly bought. Our losses had been heavy. Augereau was wounded. His terrible grenadiers, with "their hairy hats and their flaming pompoons," had been destroyed. The emperor wrote to the empress:

"There was a great battle yesterday. The victory was mine, but I lost many men. The enemy's losses, which are worse still, are no consolation to me."

My wound was more serious than it had at first appeared. When I was able to travel, Ney gave me my itinerary, and with it my official order of departure. I did not venture to murmur against this unavoidable separation. The sights of the war had made a profound impression upon me, and my respect for the sacred ties by which Ney was bound, and which established a barrier between us, imbued me with strength to bear the parting.

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My passion was stilled at the thought of the legitimate affection which I should have been ashamed to attempt to displace, and at the thought of the young and beautiful wife whom Ney so justly cherished, and of his children, his only pride next to his country's honour.

Ney's splendid conduct in this campaign proved him worthy of the name of "the bravest of the brave," which the army afterwards unanimously conferred upon him. The soldiers, in their fashion of giving symbolical names, had, in the same way that they called Napoleon the "Little Corporal" because of his small stature, dubbed Ney the "Red Lion," because of his very light hair. When at the critical moment his cannons were heard in the distance, the soldiers would say to each other that it was the "Red Lion" growling, and that all would go well.

I left Ney on the 24th of February, 1807. The journey was very painful. I did not count the days, but they seemed exceedingly long until I arrived at Nancy. I arrived there in worse condition than when I was first wounded. I remained at Nancy a few days only. I was obliged to stop at Bar and then at Chalons. At Thierry I became feverish. But I was determined upon continuing the journey by hook or by crook. Upon reaching Saint Denis, however, I could go no further, and Hans put me to bed. After a few days, with more courage mustered than health, I decided to move on to Paris.

There I settled down for a time, living very quietly in a pretty house near Saint Cloud. Most of my friends were absent in the country or at the wars. Paris had no charm for me. My heart was with the French Army.

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GENERAL JUNOT, DUKE D'ABRANTES
(*From the Painting by Raverat*)

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CHAPTER XI

JUNOT'S INCIPIENT MADNESS — NAPOLEON'S SISTERS ON THRONES — DESCRIPTION OF ELISA BACCIOCHI, GRAND DUCHESS OF TUSCANY—IDA'S APPOINTMENT TO HER COURT — REBELLIOUSNESS OF THE TUSCANS AGAINST FRENCH AUTHORITY — A SOLDIER-SULTAN—THE AUTHORESS' FUNCTIONS AT COURT — THE HAINGUERLOTS, A FASHIONABLE PAIR — PRINCE BACCIOCHI HIS WIFE'S LOYAL SUBJECT — "THE LITTLE NAPOLEON" — AUDIENCE WITH QUEEN CAROLINE OF NAPLES — ROYAL FROCKS, FRILLS, AND SMALL TALK — MURAT AS AN AMATEUR TRAGEDIAN — HIS THEATRICAL BRAVERY.

My health was long in becoming restored, and concluding to seek final cure beyond the mountains, I started for Italy in the autumn of 1807.

General Monchoisy, in command at Genoa for Prince Borghese, gave me a safe conduct for the Ligurian towns and the towns in the Apennines I wished to visit. There had been insurrectionary movements in Parma and Piacenza during the French occupation. Junot, who was commander-in-chief in those territories, put down the rebels with an iron hand, and had the villages burnt from which the revolt had first spread. Junot thereupon made a tour of that part of the country. He entered Bobbio in a grand procession, with aides-de-camp and high officials and with the church bells sounding a Te Deum. The general then gave the authorities an audience at his house.

Sultan and general in one, Junot received his visitors

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reclining on a lounge draped with Oriental stuffs. His whole retinue of officers and officials remained standing. Only the women were allowed to sit down. And he insisted on their being young and handsome at that. Upon leaving the town, Junot, who was an excellent marksman, amused himself along the road by shooting a pistol at the peasants' poultry and ducks, from the back of his galloping horse. But to show that his liberality was as fine as his aim, he threw a five-franc piece to every peasant who brought him a dead bird, and the poor villagers would make off in high glee with the victim and the money. But such strange actions pointed to a badly balanced brain. They were the first symptoms of the insanity to which the Duc d'Abrantès was finally to succumb.

At this time three sisters of Napoleon sat on ducal or royal thrones in Italy. Pauline Borghese was Duchess of Guastalla, Elisa Bacciochi Grand Duchess of Tuscany, and Caroline Murat Queen of Naples. If only one was a queen, the other two each had a court nevertheless. Pauline's I had already seeen, and some happy days were before me at Princess Bacciochi's. I hoped for a favourable reception at the hands of the Grand Duchess, first because of my former acquaintance with Lucien, then through her own recollection of me, and finally owing to my intimacy of an hour with Napoleon. I had a letter, too, to M. de Châteauneuf, then grand chamberlain to Princess Elisa.

Nothing was done at the courts of his relatives but what Napoleon was informed. The nominations for the smallest posts were submitted to his sovereign approval. But since the coronation festivities at Milan I feared least of all that the imperial grace would be withheld.

At Florence I petitioned for a private audience with the Grand Duchess of Tuscany. From this very interview began her kindness towards me, which was to continue and abound for four years after. Elisa was not

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PAULINE BONAPARTE, PRINCESS BORGHESE
(*From the Engraving by Madame Fournier*)

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beautiful; short, slender, almost lean, she yet possessed the various personal qualities which, combined with cleverness and liveliness, make a seductive woman. Her distinguished bearing made her appear well formed; in motion she was both graceful and dignified. Her feet were small, her hands were as perfect as her brother's—that brother who so liked his to be noticed. The loveliest of black eyes lit up her face, and she knew how to make the most of them when she wanted to be obeyed or admired. None of Napoleon's brothers or sisters resembled him more than Elisa: she had a quick, alert, penetrating mind, a glowing imagination, a strong soul, and a touch of greatness. She was good enough to recognize me, and to remember having heard me recite poetry at Lucien Bonaparte's House. She promised to speak about me to M. de Châteauneuf, and to have an appointment given me at court.

"You have cleverness and a good education," she said. "Try not to utilize them in making yourself enemies. The emperor, I am sure, will be pleased with my choice. His interest in you, and the good will of my brothers Louis and Joseph are a sure guarantee of my friendship. I hope your conduct will always be such as to merit it."

Sometime after came the imperial ratification. The Grand Duchess commanded my presence at the palace to tell me of it, which she did in the most gracious manner possible. She asked about my relations with Moreau and my feelings for Michael Ney. In spite of the situation which kept us asunder, and the ties of duty I was obliged to respect, I told the Princess Elisa openly that I harboured a fraternal affection for Ney, passionate concerning his fame, but only friendly as to himself. She approved my sentiments, and repeated her good advice.

Of all parts of Italy, Tuscany was that in which the French had found the strongest aversion current to their supremacy. The French officers were not many—to

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each of the nine political divisions a prefect, a commissary general of police, a military commander, and a few Frenchmen in the highest places. The secondary posts were held mostly by Tuscans, whose judges sat in the offices at court, supplying all the chamberlains, equerries, chaplains, pages, &c. For the public safety there were the Italian troops, a few regiments from France, and the police. The undecided character of our first victories in the German campaign, Spain ready to fight us, the absence of the French troops from their garrisons on active service—these circumstances encouraged our enemies in Italy to show their presumptuous defiance of us. Seditious manifestoes were every day placarded in Florence, Pisa, and other towns. The peasants of Arezzo had already appeared with arms in their hands at the gates of Siena, and already the French and their partisans were being railed at. Our Italian friends were already compiling proscription blacklists for future use.

At this juncture of affairs, the Grand Duchess, seconded by General Menou, exhibited great strength. In concert with the generals she arranged energetic measures. An order was issued for the arming of all officials, for the benefit of public defence. Even the lights of the law were not spared this impressment, and nothing was more diverting than to see the learned judges of Italy obliged to leave their benches and buckle on swords. To being armed and equipped in military style they offered greater resistance than they probably would have to a bayonet charge. General Menou, who had been commander-in-chief of the forces in Piedmont before Prince Borghese, had retained the leadership of the twenty-seventh military district. He had accepted his backward promotion philosophically, consoling himself with making love to the actresses at the theatre in Turin. He was then seventy-two years old, enormously fat, very amiable and an incorrigible spendthrift. The emperor had more than once paid his debts, but at last grew tired of doing so.

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PRINCESS BACCIOCHI, SISTER OF NAPOLEON

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Abdallah Menou, as he was nick-named, was forever plunging into fresh expenditures. He gave a carnival ball at Turin which lasted three days without intermission. New sets of musicians and dancers followed one another amid splendours that appeared never ending. The ball only came to a close on Ash Wednesday. This celebration cost a huge sum, which Menou could not pay, and which Prince Borghese met from his private exchequer. Menou had brought back from Egypt, where he had become something of a Mussulman, an Arab woman whom he never took out with him. He was quite right, since this daughter of Mahomet was very ugly. General Menou, it is plain, was an individual with original tastes. However, when the time came for action, he went to work vigorously enough. He wrote to the bishops saying that he held them responsible for the public peace, and that at the first outbreak in their dioceses he would throw them into prison. He promised the bishops that if blood was spilt they should be made martyrs of. This was a good system; the country remained quiet.

My actual functions were those of reader to the Grand Duchess, and because of her kindness I did my best to please her. She particularly liked my declamation of Tasso's and Ariosto's harmonious lines. Nominally a member of the court theatre, I drew a salary for duties I was never called upon to perform. The princess treated me with the greatest liberality, defraying all my travelling expenses. My work was very light, since it was really that of a substitute. The official reader was Mme. Tomasi, whom the Grand Duchess found solemn, frigid, and stiff, caring for nothing but the rules of etiquette. But when I read to my mistress, not a lady-in-waiting was there, not a maid of honour; there was not a sign of formality nor of difference in rank. I read aloud, at my own choice, such selections from the Italian and French poets and prosaists as I judged best suited to the princess' mood or her general predilections.

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Among the high officials at court, I will mention Hainguerlot, the receiver-general. This person, his hair powdered like a nobleman's in the pre-Revolutionary era, his waist slim and his port as proud as a fashionable dandy's, fastidious and dainty from the diamond in his shirt-frill to the enamelled buckles on his shoes, partook at once of the aristocrat, the contractor, and the lady-killer. M. Hainguerlot, who was perhaps as well educated as anyone else, made no effort to show it, and was endowed with an unusual talent of pleasing. He excelled in what I might call the spirit of the Directory, an expression which will be barely appreciated excepting by those who have studied the morals and manners of that period. It was a mixture of smart and rather noisy mirthfulness and of great freedom of speech and principles. This was well adapted to M. Hainguerlot's character, and shed a natural grace upon his facile and opulent ways. He was married to one of the "wonderful women" of the Directory.

During the years preceding the Consulate, Mme. Hainguerlot, with Mme. Tallien, Mme. Bonaparte, and Mme. Récamier, whose intimate she then was, cut a conspicuous figure in the gay life of Parisian society. Very tall and thin, she was less handsome than her friends, but dressed with the most exacting taste, and bore herself with distinction. The minute pains she bestowed upon her toilet were reflected in her speech and manner, which bristled with affectations, not so much when she was at home, as when she was in society. Under the Directory she gave brilliant teas at her house in the Rue Mont-Blanc. There were charades, readings dancing, conversation. Boufflers, a frequenter of the house, called Mme. Hainguerlot the Tenth Muse. The compliment was pronounced to be somewhat of an exaggeration. At Mme. Hainguerlot's, as at Mme. Hamelin's, the fashionables of the financial world, conspicuous for extravagance,

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gathered together. Some of the bankers, drawn into excessive speculation, became insolvent about the beginning of the Empire, while others, like Hottinger, were able to maintain a justly honoured and respected name in the highest financial circles through long years.

At the Grand Duchess' private parties the guests talked and laughed freely, played billiards, and occasionally hide-and-go-seek. The simplest amusements became through the place and the persons the most delightful and exciting pleasures. Ices, sherbet, and punch circulated as liberally as witty sayings. The princess would make me recite poetry, but the honour of reading out the bulletins from the grand army she reserved to herself.

Prince Felix Bacciochi, the scion of a substantial Corsican family, and endowed with such valour as had paved his way to a fine military career, properly understood and accepted the exigencies of the situation which he owed to the marvellous fortunes of his brother-in-law, whose whole family had risen with them. He had submitted to the emperor's wishes with a good grace, and had cheerfully resigned himself to being his wife's loyal subject. Elisa governed in her own name. She was grand duchess; the prince was her husband, not her equal. Gifted with a good personal appearance and with enough brains for a handsome man, Bacciochi was Elisa's consort only in the conjugal sense of the word. Their union was no more than an exchange of regard and polite attentions. Prince Felix did not live with his sovereign. He inhabited another mansion in Florence, known as his court, whose denizens were chiefly of the military persuasion. Model wife and husband, Elisa and Felix, although compulsorily separated, in public and at the theatre exhibited the most cordial relations—he deferential, she affectionate and dignified, both unconstrained and unembarrassed, with their child sitting at the front of the box as a token of their marriage. This child was a pretty little

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girl, whose face was reminiscent of her father's good looks and her mother's cleverness. All her motions were full of impatience and vivacity. She would show her small pride in her name in an original manner, by exclaiming either in anger or in joy:

"I am the little Napoleon!"

Her minute highness was fond of talking charity. One day she gave this exuberant answer:

"But I am the little Napoleon, so I must be better than other children, because I am much happier!"

The performance ended with the fall of the curtain at the theatre. The prince escorted the princess to her carriage, and then both returned to their homes—and their liberty. On the days of state entertainments Felix was always in attendance upon Elisa. Had it not been for the vows exchanged at the altar between the sister of Napoleon I. and the adjutant Bacciochi, he would have infallibly have been taken for her chief equerry.

Desiring to see Naples, where Murat, the husband of Napoleon's sister Caroline was reigning as Joachim I. King of the two Sicilies, I obtained a two months' leave of absence from Florence, and was furnished by the grand duchess with a letter of introduction to Caroline and one to Murat.

I was granted an audience with the queen at Caserta, the royal summer residence near Naples. Upon arriving at Caserta from Naples, I walked about the lovely gardens belonging to the palace while the queen was completing her toilet. I was finally ushered into a room where I found her alone. Her son Achilles, the heir to the crown, and his tutor, M. Baudus, had just left her. She was good enough to make me an apology for keeping me waiting. I bowed with due respect. The queen had a sneering chuckle whenever she spoke, which grew both tiresome and painful. By nature awkward and dull, she did her utmost to be affable that day.

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CAROLINE MURAT, QUEEN OF NAPLES, SISTER OF NAPOLEON
(*From an Engraving by Hopwood*)

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Of a sudden a lady-in-waiting came hurriedly into the room. True that the reason of her haste was profound. A box of new fashions had arrived from Paris by a special messenger, and at the same time fresh and severer instructions concerning the "continental blockade" against England. Forthwith, the queen, oblivious of etiquette and royal dignity, ordered the box to be brought to her at once. With her own hands she pulled out the dresses and cloaks and hats and trimmings, which soon littered the whole floor.

"How does my sister Elisa dress?" asked the Queen of Naples. "What colour suits her best? How do you think I look in this hat? Napoleon, you know, between victories remembers to send us these trifles, which are so important to us women!"

And so she rattled on. Then going on to more serious subjects, she talked to me about the Neapolitans, their customs, their tastes, about her efforts and the king's to make them happy. This audience lasted an hour.

My presentation to King Joachim was a more ceremonious affair. Prince Pignatelli conducted me to the king's apartments, and I was invited to wait in an ante-chamber.

While examining this royal ante-chamber with a woman's curiosity, I heard something like a low plaintive murmur proceed from the room adjoining. My blood froze in my veins. Ever ready to conjure up imaginary scenes of terror, I conceived that a plot against Murat's life was perhaps being carried out, and already pictured an assassin plunging an Italian stiletto into his heart. Listening intently, I heard the plaint grow louder and longer. There could be no doubt about it. The king's study was the theatre of some struggle involving threats and violence. The chamberlain on duty, meanwhile, who was much nearer the door of the study than myself, evinced not the least sign of either surprise or emotion. Did he not hear? Was he an accomplice in the crime being committed so near him, with only a door and a curtain

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between? I unconsciously took a step towards the door. Then only did the chamberlain seem to take any note of my anxiety, and addressed me as follows:

"Please to be reassured, Madam. His Majesty is in no danger. The king is beloved here in Naples. The affection of his people and the devotion of his trusted ones would be sufficient guarantee against the possibility of a criminal assault. The noise you have just been observing was made by His Majesty in person. The king has a marked taste for the drama, especially for tragedies of the kind that elevate. A well-known actor often comes here to play Talma's parts to the king in private. His Majesty, who has a prodigious memory, and knows these tragic rôles by heart, prompts the actor if necessary, and himself recites the lines of the Cid, or Tancred, or Orosmane, as the case may be. To-day, I admit, the proceedings are unusually animated, and might readily frighten anyone like yourself who was unaware of the innocent amusement His Majesty is indulging in."

A bell sounded, and then a man with a shaven chin issued from the royal study. He looked quite harmless, not at all like a conspirator. Another bell announced that the king was ready to give his next audience. Prince Pignatelli answered the bell, remained inside a few moments, came back, and took me into the presence of King Joachim.

Murat was standing in the middle of his large study, dressed as if for a state ball, in a costume of bright silk, his head surmounted by a waving plume. He had curly hair, a brown complexion, eyes that were at the same time soft and vivacious, and a proud, erect head. The most extraordinary thing was that, in spite of his silly troubadour garb, he was not at all ridiculous, but seemed natural and unaffected, talking quite pleasantly and spontaneously.

I was at once astonished and dazzled. The king appeared gratified at the impression he made upon me,

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JOACHIM MURAT, KING OF NAPLES
(*From an Engraving Published in London in* 1814)

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and spoke to me most civilly, with a touch of gallantry. He talked about Florence, the grand duchess' Court, Elisa's guard of honour, whose splendid bearing he had often heard praised, but who could not compare with his own Neapolitan light horse, &c. He invited me to attend the forthcoming review of his troops, and graciously expressed the hope that I should enjoy my visit to Naples, and that I would stay there for some time. I took my leave very well pleased with the affable reception accordcorded me by His Majesty, who with engaging politeness walked to the door of his study with me. I was delighted to have met, at close quarters, the soldier who, with Ney, was known as the bravest among the brave, the dashing horseman who led charges against the enemy with a riding whip in his hand, the theatrical monarch whom it secretly amused to have his fine clothes and his plumes a target for shot in battle.

Murat, much better adapted for government than Joseph, whom he had succeeded as King of Naples, himself achieved the conquest of the hearts of his people. He needed not the assistance of his "Parisian brother-in-law," as he called Napoleon, to establish public order. A sick man when he came to take the throne, in spite of menacing warnings he had made his entry on horseback, without a surrounding escort, twenty yards in front of his staff, exposing his breast boldly to the popular wrath. He had thus won the regard of the Neapolitans.

My position at Florence became more delightful day by day. But all the while the memory of Ney was alive in a corner of my heart, which remained faithful to him during what I might designate as my fraternal widowhood. In the course of my readings to Princess Elisa, I would frequently to stop to ask for news about the movements of the French armies. Far from resenting this, the princess willingly gave me all the particulars I requested. In this way I was kept well informed as to all the great wars and the part played in them by Michael Ney.

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CHAPTER XII

THE FATAL RUSSIAN EXPEDITION — JOURNEY TO MOSCOW WITH NIDIA — THE FRENCH THEATRE AT MOSCOW — BURNING OF THE CITY BY THE RUSSIANS — A SCENE OF DEVASTATION AND PILLAGE — UNSCRUPULOUS LOOTING BY THE FRENCH TROOPS — DIFFICULTIES IN PASSING THE DNIEPER — NIDIA AND IDA SHOOT SOME COSSACKS — PRIVATIONS OF WOMEN DURING THE RETREAT—AND WORSE—THE BREAKING DOWN OF THE BERESINA BRIDGE — A HEARTRENDING EPISODE — THE LAST OF NIDIA—THE "BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE" — DID HE BEAT THE "CONTEMPORARY"?

THE famous Russian expedition was about to begin. If what I have already written about my adventurous career has not shown what a daring spirit I had, it should be enough to say that I unhesitatingly made up my mind to chance the perils of the campaign of 1812.

Well provided with the wherewithal, due to the generous bounty of Elisa, I was able to gratify my fancies. I was granted a leave of absence from Florence. I took no one into my confidence. Nor did I write to Ney, since he would have interposed his formal veto. I set out with scarcely a hope that I should so much as gain his approbation by exposing myself to all these fresh dangers for his sake. Disguised as a man I followed the rear of the army. As far as Poland I absolved that part of the journey conveniently enough in a post chaise. But from there on

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things grew more hazardous. Always in the midst of strangers and convoys, I was liable to the worst perils that a woman has to fear. I had letters to a few of the generals, and this was the only measure of precaution I had taken. Arriving at Wilna, where the headquarters had been established, I saw a gigantic army assembled, whose acclaim, "Long live Napoleon!" in six different languages was but the prelude to a disaster without precedent in the history of man.

There were many women accompanying the troops. I was fortunate enough to find a friend among them in the person of a young Lithuanian whose enthusiasm for the French had made a heroine of her. She had given Prince Eugene some important information regarding the movements of Platow. In her martial transports Nidia was, however, taken up with a secret and intense passion. Alas, in that terrible war she sustained the loss of him who inspired her with so much courage—the valiant General Montbrun.

At this stage I was travelling in a party of four women. We moved onwards, according to the progress of the army, in its rear We journeyed now in a carriage, now in a sledge, and later on walked or rode on horseback, ever braving fatigues which only love and patriotism can render supportable. Two of the women succumbed. Nidia and I, seasoned campaigners, held out. After one march of thirty miles through almost impracticable swamps, we halted in a wretched little village. Here we heard of the immortal feat of the Moskwa, which brought Ney his prince's title. Nidia learnt later on of the death of General Montbrun, who was all her joy.

We at length reached Moscow, of which our troops took possession on the 16th of September. The great city seemed a huge tomb to us. Its empty streets and deserted houses oppressed the soul. We were lodged near the Mimonoff mansion, which was occupied by Prince

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Eugene. The sight of this young hero, and the shouts of the soldiers which greeted his arrival, for the moment rocked us upon illusions of victory. We had gone to sleep and were in the happy land of dreams when we were aroused by gleaming flames, the yells of pillagers, and all the horrors of a town on fire. Our doors were battered down by some soldiers of the fourth corps, who warned us to escape at once from our house, which had already begun to burn. We, like the whole army, had expected to find comfortable quarters in Moscow, and in the holy city of Russia to enjoy the repose we needed after all the hardships and sufferings undergone in the attainment of this wonderful remote city, this gate of Asia. But we had counted without Russian ferocity.

For several years there had been at Moscow a French theatre, whose members were much liked by the Russians. The Franco-Russians, as they were called, never in any way took a hand in politics. Nevertheless, the governor of Moscow, when he left the town, took away with him forty French residents, among whom was the stage-manager of this theatre, M. Domergue. These unfortunates were carried off to the interior of Russia, where they were kept as prisoners until peace was declared. Upon reaching Moscow we found the actresses of the troupe eagerly awaiting the French as liberators. There were Mme. Domergue, Mme. Fusil, Mme. Verteuil, Mme. de Burnay, and others whose names I do not remember. Mme. Domergue, the wife of the stage-manager taken away into captivity by the Russians, was suckling a young baby. Her house being on fire, she rushed into the street as the emperor was passing by.

"Have pity on me, Your Majesty!" she cried. "Save my child!"

"Do not be alarmed, Madam," replied the emperor, "do not be alarmed; you and your child shall be taken care of."

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Mme. Domergue followed the emperor's staff to the Perowski palace, the temporary headquarters of the army, where she and her baby were taken care of.

When the emperor returned to the Kremlin, and until the eve of the departure of the army, by command of His Majesty the French actors gave performances in the theatre of the castle. One of the actresses—belonging to the French troupe—whom we met on the very day of our arrival at Moscow, Mme. Louise Fusil, was of the greatest help to us, and told us about the preparations for the great calamity. She had witnessed the departure of the Russian troops, the nobility, the rich merchants, the ordinary citizens, in fact the whole Russian population, which had left the city doomed to the flames by barbaric patriotism. In this savage exodus, the sacred images—the guardian saints of the city—had been taken out last of all in a procession, amid the wailings of the kneeling populace apprehensive of the gravest misfortunes. Even before the arrival of the French the police had warned the inhabitants to evacuate Moscow: the town was to be set on fire. Thereupon the fire engines had gone. The police, too, left Moscow, but not without first opening the doors of the prisons and putting torches and fire-bombs into the hands of the wretched inmates. Most of the houses of Moscow were built of wood. A few of them and the large mansions were of stone, with sheet-metal roofs whose deal frame-work was highly inflammable. The fire broke out in several quarters at once. Small red balloons, charged with Congreve fuses, were sent up into the air by the Russian incendiaries, and fell down among the houses. The conflagration spread very rapidly. A violent wind was blowing. For four nights the brightness caused by the fire was such as to be the equivalent of daylight.

We were, as I said, driven out of our dwelling by the flames. After the fire had passed over it we went back.

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THE BURNING OF MOSCOW IN 1812
(*From a Rare Old French Engraving*)

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The sights we saw were both sad and awful. We made an encampment surrounded by ruins. A table was set up in the middle of the street. On every side were burning houses and smoking ruins. We were covered with ashes blown upon us by the wind. Incendiaries caught with torches or ends of tow, soaked in oil, were being marched by close at hand. Tipsy soldiers passed, dragging the loot with them which they had captured. Truly they were phantoms of the infernal regions! The churches were full of old men, women and children, who, having relied upon an ancient tradition that the holy city was impregnable, were now giving way to unbounded despair.

There was a Roman Catholic church at Moscow, whose venerable pastor had lived in Russia for many years, and was beloved by the Muscovites. Round his church was a large space built over with wooden huts, where the poor might always find a refuge. Seeing the town on fire and being plundered by the frantic soldiery, many of the old men, women and children of the labouring class fled to the enclosure belonging to the church, imploring the good old French priest for protection. When the soldiers knocked at the gates the minister opened them in his sacerdotal vestments, crucifix in hand, and surrounded by the poor *moujiks*. He spread out his arms towards the French soldiers, who reverently drew back. Napoleon, being notified of the occurrence, thenceforth had the church guarded. Otherwise there were sentinels only at the storehouses. The streets were overrun with soldiers roving about at large, and pilfering all articles of value they could lay hands on. I saw two of them dragging along a pretty young Russian woman. They did not maltreat her, but used all their eloquence to persuade her that she was to be envied at being singled out by the two handsomest grenadiers of the French army. My friend Nidia and I thought it our duty to interfere. The mere mention of Ney and Montbrun sufficed to make the men

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desist from their purpose. The names we invoked acted like a talisman. The grenadiers immediately relinquished their hold of the "private person," whom we had the pleasure of restoring to her friends. Nearly dead with fatigue, we were finally lodged through the kindness of Prince Eugene in one of the pavilions of the castle. The general staff was in tents all about us.

In the beginning of a retreat through a forsaken, devastated country, the camps were full of luxurious things. There were carriages, rich furniture, carpets, pictures, and statues, and the horses grazed in the gardens. Good humour still reigned supreme. As yet privations had not dampened mirth. Gaiety and gallantry were so to speak the last surviving virtues in this war. We were treated with consideration by everyone.

Presently morals began to loosen. Everybody's most useful property vanished. All day you would hear: "Oh! someone has stolen my portmanteau!" Or, "Someone has stolen my haversack!" Or, "Someone has stolen my bread!" Or, "Someone has stolen my horse!" And so on from private soldier to general.

The emperor made an often quoted joke during the awful retreat from Russia. Seeing one of his officers wrapped up in a magnificent fur coat, he called to him, laughing:

"Where did you steal that?"

"Your Majesty, I bought it!"

"Yes, you bought it from someone who was asleep!"

Mme. Fusil, the French actress we had met at Moscow, took part, like other Franco-Russians, in the retreat of the army. She had fallen in with a nephew of M. de Caulaincourt, an orderly officer to the emperor, and travelled in a comfortable carriage with the imperial staff as far as Smolensk. There was but one bridge over the Dnieper giving access to the other bank. The road was choked up; all wanted to cross the river at once. The

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approaches to the bridge were guarded, and its passage was superintended by general officers. You would hear them exclaiming: "Let marshal so and so pass!" Or "Let general so and so pass!"

Nidia and I were waiting for our turn, and were glad to encounter Mme. Fusil, who applied to General de la Riboisière. She begged him to allow our carriage to pass, which had been waiting all day. Our horses were quite worn out. I seconded the petition, lamenting that we should be lost if we did not join the general staff. In spite of my toughness I burst into tears.

"Wait a moment," said the good general, touched by my woeful state, "I will do my best to get you across."

He contrived to send our carriage over in the Prince d' Eckmühl's train. The servant in charge of the prince's luggage thought our friend was a general's wife, and showed her marked civility. All along the bridge were impatient officers waiting for their regiments. For the Cossacks were not far off. The bridge once passed, another danger was in store for us. The wheels of our carriage stuck in the mud. Now, any vehicle that obstructed the road was burnt. Our situation was critical. On all sides we heard shouts of "That carriage is blocking the way! Set fire to it!" The soldiers were eager for booty. But an officer took pity on us, and commanded:

"To the wheels, men!"

Extricated from the mire, our carriage was now able to proceed on the journey, while Mme. Fusil rejoined the imperial staff. We parted from our compatriot thanking and blessing her from the bottom of our hearts.

A number of the soldiers wore fur-lined satin cloaks over their uniforms. Moustachioed, helmeted veterans of the imperial guard had on blue or pink pelisses, after the manner of the fashionable Muscovite ladies. The old "grumblers" privately laughed at their masquerade.

We left Smolensk on the 17th of November, 1812, tak-

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ing the direction of Wilna. On the way we met one of General Ornano's cavalry regiments, belonging to the Duke de Reggio's corps. Up till then no Cossacks had molested us. They now for the first time appeared behind our unguarded carriage with their insolent "hurrahs." Nidia fired eight pistol-shots at them, of which five took effect, and I, after some hesitation, fired a shot which went home. The Cossacks, thus kept at bay for an instant, showed their heels when they heard the gallop of our cavalry. Platow's soldiers' favourite exploits were attacks upon baggage trains.

On another occasion—near Viazma—Nidia became engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with a Cossack. Discovering her to be a woman, desire prompted him to redouble his efforts. Fortunately, once more timely rescue came. The Cossacks scampered away over the snow like a flock of crows. Arriving in camp, Nidia was acclaimed by the soldiers to whom in the midst of hardships and peril she was setting such an example of courage and strength of soul.

In one of these conflicts Nidia had a wound inflicted upon her near the temple. She was by my side, and fright made me remember my sex. For a moment I became unnerved and began to sob.

"For God's sake keep calm!" said Nidia in a much firmer voice than mine. "If I stay behind I shall be killed. Let me get on a horse." And, her head once bandaged, the brave Lithuanian sat her steed with a resolution which would have been surprising in anyone else.

As long as we had provisions we shared them with the most necessitous. And we were rewarded. For the weak and the needy often shared their poor fare with us. At some of our wretched meals the only course was horse-flesh. My stomach turned at the sight of it. A little flour was left, and by a strict order a certain quantity in spoon-

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fuls was doled out to each officer. A young sub-lieutenant, whom horseflesh also disgusted, was nevertheless generous enough to surrender some of his portion to us, and others did likewise. The accounts of this campaign have truly depicted the painful side of it, the sufferings and the hunger. When the extreme rigours of winter began, with the intense cold and the violent snowstorms, the army's plight became terrible. M. de Ségur has far from exhausted the details of this dreadful retreat. I have known unfortunate women to pay for the privilege of warming themselves at a camp fire, or for a day's filthy rations, with the most humiliating favours. And I have known them to be left to perish by the roadside, abandoned by the men who in the miseries of the morrow forgot their victims of the day before.

Some months later I met Mme. Fusil in Paris. She recounted what happened to her after she had passed the Dnieper. She was left by the roadside, perishing with cold, when luckily Marshal Lefebvre and his humane surgeon-in-chief, Desgenettes, came upon her. They swathed her in furs and took her to a farmhouse. The marshal made her drink some strong coffee from a goblet which he begged her to retain as a keepsake. He invited her to continue the journey in his carriage, which already bore his dangerously wounded son. The grateful actress bestowed every possible care upon the young man. Next day the carriage passed the Beresina, a few minutes only before the breaking down of the bridge. When that shocking disaster occurred, the retreating French troops —all disorganized and demoralized, and the while sustaining the Russian artillery fire—had been pouring across this bridge for three days. Nidia and myself had found shelter under two waggons coupled together, where a canteen woman and her two children were waiting for a favourable opportunity to get across— which we did with General Gérard's division.

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We were far from the scene of the catastrophe when it occurred, but Mme. Fusil had witnessed it from close quarters.

"When the bridge gave way," she said, "we heard a shriek go up from the throng, a single, indescribable shriek. It still sounds in my ear whenever I think of that day! All the poor creatures left on the other bank of the river were being mowed down by the enemy's shots. It was then that the real horror of the situation became apparent. The ice was too thin. It yielded, and men, women, horses, vehicles were swallowed up. We saw a woman, holding her infant in her arms, wedged in between two floes. An attempt was made to save her by holding out a gun to her. She tried to seize the end of it, but the very struggles she made in the effort made the ice divide and she went down with her child. I could endure those terrible sights no longer, and turned away. My own fate was remarkable. If I had not been left behind in the snow, I should not have been found by Marshal Lefebvre, and like so many of the fugitives should have been drowned in the Beresina. When I came back to France, if I was presented or recommended to anyone, it was always with the formula: 'She crossed the Beresina.'"

Concerning myself, the Beresina once behind me, I felt that I was safe, and that I should once more set foot in France. But before seeing my adopted country again, a sad grief befel me. For Nidia had reached her country, and was to return to the parental hearth. I vainly endeavoured to induce her to come with me. She refused. So we parted, each going our own way as destiny bade us. I shed tears at parting from this admirable and heroic girl, who, alas, met her death at Torgau, at the passage of the Elbe.

The remains of the army at length quitted Russian soil, and entered Polish Prussia. At Marienwerder I met a private soldier of the third corps, who had been wounded

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by a bullet while close to Marshal Ney. My eagerness to get the news from the man who uttered that cherished name may easily be imagined.

"You saw him, then?" I enquired.

"Yes, Madam, and he was all the time in front with the firing line. I loaded my gun only a few paces from him. His behaviour was enough to put heart into the worst coward. It was he who saved us by boldly putting the river between us and Milodarowitch's soldiers. It was then that the gallant marshal rushed into our midst, exclaiming: 'Men, will you desert a commander who has never deserted you? If the worst comes to the worst, I will go alone!'"

The soldier then told me what particulars he knew of the retreat from Moscow, in which Ney won glory immortal and because of which he was by the whole army called "the bravest of the brave."

The misery that all ranks of the army were subjected to from highest to lowest had not diminished the power of gold. By money, therefore, I found the means of making my presence known. I learnt that Ney was to pass by a certain spot, and posted myself in a tumbledown hut near by. My men's clothes were in a lamentably ragged condition, and it seemed unlikely that anyone could recognize me for a woman. But at the first glance Ney knew who I was. I was about to rush towards him, when he burst out into vigorous language, very different in sentiment from my disposition towards him, accompanied by a violent gesture.

"What are you doing here? What do you want? Go away at once!" he exclaimed.

Then came some blunt reprimands because of my rashness, because of my mania for following him about everywhere. In vain did I try to say a few words, and to appeal to him by pointing to the state of my clothes. He cared neither for what I said, nor for the sight I pre-

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sented. There was no stopping his wrath at finding me where he did. He let me understand it, too, in the most emphatic terms. Thunderstruck at such treatment, I stood stark for an hour, staring blankly at nothing, yet still seeming to see him before me. The next year, when I reminded Ney of his fury, which was followed by such cruel neglect, he told me that he had felt so mortally wrought up over my recklessness in exposing myself to the dangers and license of a campaign, that he had even been tempted to beat me. Indeed, the temptation was so strong that I am not quite sure he had not yielded to it.

At Serokodia, I might have spoken with him again. He had just won another battle. But I contented myself with listening to the shouts of joy of his troops at a distance. The interview at Marienwerder had somewhat cooled my ardour. My feelings for Ney were now mingled with fear. He afterwards (1813) scolded me for associating myself with Nidia and remaining with Prince Eugene's army. I explained to the marshal thatEugene's solicitude had been for Nidia only, and that I had kept in the background while benefiting by the prince's favours. Ney had all sorts of notions in his head, and would not believe my earnest protestations

Since to meet him again during the rest of the retreat would have been to risk another scene like that at Marienwerder, I took good care not to seek such a diversion once more.

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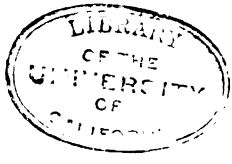
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LOUIS BONAPARTE, KING OF HOLLAND.

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CHAPTER XIII

JOURNEY TO STYRIA — LOUIS BONAPARTE, KING, NOVELIST, POET AND PHILANTHROPIST — MEETING WITH NEY IN THE CHAMPS ELYSEES — A PRIVATE BACHELOR'S BREAKFAST WITH THE MARSHAL — HIS TIRADE AGAINST ROYALIST INTRIGUERS AND FLUNKEY POLITICIANS — A GLIMPSE AT NAPOLEON'S PLEBEIAN MOTHER—COMMERCIAL DEPRESSION AT THE FRENCH METROPOLIS IN 1814 — THE LOWER CLASSES REGARD NAPOLEON AS THE SYMBOL OF THE REVOLUTION — ANOTHER CAMPAIGNING EXPEDITION IN MEN'S CLOTHES — ELATION IN PARIS OVER FRENCH VICTORIES — WHILE THE ALLIES ARE MARCHING UPON THE CAPITAL.

My next journey took me to Styria. At Gratz I went to see Louis Bonaparte, the former king of Holland. I felt that I had some claim to being well received by this ill-treated sovereign. I had been honoured with the friendship of his favourite sister, and I was an Italian naturalized in Holland. That country had for him the sweetest memories of his life. He could not speak of it without emotion. To the pleasure it gave the ex-king to talk about Holland I was no doubt indebted for much of the extreme kindness he showered upon me during my sojourn in Gratz, aside from the open-handed hospitality which he was so fond of dispensing to all strangers. Louis Bonaparte was much beloved at Gratz, where he led the life of a well-to-do middle-class citizen. His

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features had a gentle expression. His face, which was still young, bore the imprint of the sorrows and cares he had gone through and betrayed the profound melancholy of his character.

In my first interview with the King of Holland I began with French and then spoke in Dutch. The turn of the conversation led us to talk in Italian, the natural language of us both. This facility of intercourse in several tongues engendered a mutual feeling of ease. Louis put aside his shyness, while I felt more at home in his presence. The Count de St. Leu (which was the name he went by in Gratz) was perhaps never more frankly affable. I, for my part, did my best to interest and entertain him. He gave me his novel "Marie" to read, which he had recently had printed, in two volumes, to the extent of a small number of copies. The merits of his verse are open to discussion. But besides writing poetry he did a great deal of good, which was his great title to admiration. His literary labours absorbed him too much to allow him to brood over his short-lived monarchical career. He was really a bard grafted on a burgomaster. I know not whether the King of Holland made many conquests among the female sex, but it was impossible not to observe the traces, in his manner and his face, of an unhappy love. Myself quite disinterested touching the question of love, I can say that I have seen him in a gallant and even tender mood. For my stay at Gratz happened to coincide with that of a handsome young person calling herself Mme. Pascal, an accomplished performer upon the harp. None of the heroines of this poet-king inspired him with more verse, nor inspired him with better.

Louis was a very charitable man. There is scarcely in all Styria a religious or public institution or a poor family which does not remember his benefactions. Having voluntarily resigned a throne, his resources were never-

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theless magnificent. The day when Austria broke her alliance with Napoleon in so faithless a manner, Louis renounced a home that he would not occupy under his brother's enemy. He was universally regretted in Styria.

I reached Paris again in November, 1813, and resumed an apartment I had formerly inhabited in the Rue Bergère. No later than the day after my arrival I began to renew interrupted relations of friendship. Among my acquaintances were numerous civil officials of high station and military officers in the upper grades. Several had disappeared from the scene or fallen on the field of battle.

An officer of the young guard handed me some letters which had come for me during the year. My friends had supposed that the calamitous Russian expedition had made a stay-at-home of me, and that I could not tear myself away from Paris. The letters were of old date, but they spoke of Ney. Was it not enough for me to have the past become the present? After his feats at Lutzen, Praelitz, and Weissenfels, the marshal had profited by an armistice to nurse a wound inflicted on him at Leipsic.

From the same officer I learnt of the death of my poor friend Nidia, my valorous sister-in-arms, who died like a man at the crossing of the Elbe at Torgau. I shall never forget her obscure heroism, unsung on the page of history. The officer told me, too, how a young English girl of noble birth, Fanny by name, had taken it into her head to join our colours in the war of 1813 in order to please Napoleon. She had the emperor's enemies to fight and her virtue's as well, for she was remarkably pretty. Her case being brought to the emperor's notice, he gave her an audience of several minutes, before witnesses, after the battle of Dresden, speaking very kindly to her and telling her she must leave the army, which the young enthusiast did forthwith, happy to have attracted the

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great man's attention. I can think of no reason why she should be blamed.

I was not hoping to see Ney as yet, but chance came to my assistance. I met him the morning after I had paid a long visit to Regnault. He was driving down the Champs Elysées. He saw me first, and his bow told me that he was not harbouring untoward recollections of our last meeting. A ray of pleasure flitted across his face, and he ordered his carriage to stop. He got out, and we talked under the leafless trees of the avenue. His countenance was grave and careworn, and lighted up only when I spoke of his children, which were his dearest treasure, his chiefest joy. He even dwelt upon the statement that it would delight him to show them to me and acquaint me with them. Ney did not love me. On the other hand, he entertained a deep passion for his noble wife. In his friendly confidences there was a charm and naturalness which moved me intensely. With touching simplicity he mixed up the names of his old father, his wife and his children with his victories.

Getting back to his hearty military tone he said:

"Since we have met, let us have a bachelor's breakfast together! Take a carriage and drive to the Barrière Blanche. Wait for me there; I shall be with you in half an hour."

We met, accordingly, at the appointed place. He had left his cabriolet at a corner, and I was not obliged to wait long. But while standing sentinel I had looked about in vain for a suitable place to breakfast at with a marshal of the empire. Here we were then striding gaily along, jumping ditches, full of fun, like schoolboys out for a holiday. We reached the Bois de Boulogne road, that was then studded with small taverns, one of which we singled out and entered. The breakfast was like a veritable meal in camp. Ney kept in good spirits in

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FOUCHE, DUKE D'OTRANTO
(Engraved by Wolff after Girardet's Drawing)

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these rude surroundings. Three hours flew by in lively interchange of talk, without any reserve whatever either on his side or on mine, and with all the effusion of a sincere attachment. I told him what I had heard from Regnault the day before about the intrigues of the Bourbons, and mentioned the Count de Provence's manifestoes to the army.

"Yes," said Ney, "some were sent to me. There is a lot of paper wasted in the army. It would be better to use it for cartridges. This advertising of opinions has no effect upon the soldiers, nor do we officers take all these proclamations seriously. But the emperor attaches great importance to them, and the government foolishly takes notice of them. Fouché is said to be the instigator of these intrigues. Had the emperor, instead of sending him to Illyria, had him shot, he would have been taking a wise precaution. Many of those whom he thinks he has made friends of, like Fouché, and Talleyrand, and others, are betraying him. He will see! He will see! Fortunately the sound of cannon frightens the birds of prey. While the emperor has a soldier and a cannon left he may feel safe."

Then, giving full vent to his frankness, Marshal Ney gave me a sketch of the position Napoleon found himself in upon returning to the Tuileries after the battle of Leipsic. Ney thus concluded his harangue:

"His army was all gone, but he found another waiting for him—one of courtiers. A lot of use they were, all those wind-bags of the Senate, the Council of State and the Assembly! All those people could do was to flatter, which had been their tradition for ten years. And the emperor listened to that place-hunting gang! He was too good hearted, too easily persuaded, too credulous. It needs none of these gilded menials for sabring the Prussians! Napoleon ought to have clung only to the people, they were his real strength, and to the soldiers—his real friends."

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I did my utmost to correct Ney's views, but my attempts were vain. I saw plainly that he was not satisfied with the emperor's actions. He was firmly convinced that Napoleon ought to have made a treaty of peace at Dresden, arranged his affairs differently, and remained an ally of Austria.

The year 1814 opened with sad forebodings. The last days of December, 1813, had witnessed an accumulation of bad news, the loosening of the ties of loyalty, the irritation and impatience of every one attached to the emperor's fortunes.

The King of Naples had lately signed an armistice with England and an alliance with Austria, which was not only a piece of monstrous ingratitude, but shocking bad policy in itself. I felt humiliated and grieved upon learning of it. I thought of the Court of Naples, of the Court of Florence, of the Grand Duchess Elisa, who had been so kind to me, and who now must be suffering intensely at the wretched conduct of her sister Caroline. It occurred to me to go for an answer to a letter with which the grand duchess had intrusted me for "Madame Mère," as Napoleon's mother, Lætitia Bonaparte, was called. She was the only person belonging to the emperor's family who had always kept to plain manners. I went to see her in the Rue de Lille. I was introduced by one of her two chamberlains, whose manners, which savoured of the old nobility, might in a less conscientious official have been mistaken for a satirical offset to the somewhat plebeian ways of the emperor's mother.

Good old Mme. Lætitia had accepted royalty as a sinecure. She was a queen without pride or pomp. I found her seated at a table on which were twenty or thirty small baskets and various pieces of beadwork. I presented my letter.

"Thank you," she remarked, as she took it from me, "I'll see what it's about. Do you know how to make things of this kind?"

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LETITIA BONAPARTE, MOTHER OF NAPOLEON

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"No, Madam."

"Well,—nor do I. I buy them from poor women. There are lots of those left, although my son has done a great deal for them, and then ladies get them from me."

"I can easily believe that anyone would be flattered to receive a gift from Mme. Mère."

"A gift? A gift did you say? What can you be thinking of! I pay for them, and am paid back. I see, my dear, that you are not at all economical. As for me, I am not like my daughters; I don't play princess, as they do!"

I retired according to proper forms of etiquette, and in backing out of the room my foot caught in my long dress. If I had been less agile, I should certainly have had a tumble. Mme. Mère on this occasion showed that she had preserved all her natural kindness and simplicity.

"Oh, my dear!" she exclaimed, "go out in a sensible way! You nearly hurt yourself trying to be so polite!"

Mme. Mère must have been beautiful in her youth. Her features were strikingly regular, and her face irradiated a sweet disposition.

The year 1814, as I have said, opened under dark auspices. Trade was languishing in Paris. Many of the shops were closed, and a great part of the usual business was at a standstill. None but the purveyors of food—bakers, butchers and grocers—kept open. The only tradesmen to benefit by New Year's day were the confectioners and vendors of sweetmeats. Ever since the entry of the allies into France stocks had been declining in value. Government bonds had fallen from eighty-seven francs to fifty. Shares of the Bank of France, worth fourteen hundred francs in October, 1813, were being offered at seven hundred during the first fortnight of the following January. Everybody was trying to sell out their securities. The banks imposed a discount of one and one-half per cent. when exchanging silver for bank notes, and

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five per cent. if they gave gold for them. The number of failures increased day by day.

Society, the middle classes, and the financial world were openly hostile to the emperor. In drawing-rooms and eating-houses, at the Stock Exchange and the theatres, in all places where people met and exchanged ideas, the gossips and slanderers were busy. All manner of rumours were current, most of them false. In spite of the police, royalist manifestoes and seditious placards were displayed, almost with impunity. One caricature showed a Cossack handing the tsar's visiting card to Napoleon, who was in a mortal fright. Another represented the Vendôme column on the top of which stood Napoleon in the garb of a Roman emperor, with the inscription "Pass on quickly, he may fall at any moment."

But if the nobility and the middle classes were hostile to Napoleon, he had on his side the workingmen and the peasantry. Neither the universal distress nor the royalist demonstrations, nor the increase of the taxes, nor the agitation against the tax gatherers, nor insinuations, nor alarming reports could make these people swerve. In some parts of the country there were uprisings among the peasantry to the cry of "Down with vested rights! Long live the emperor!" The fact was that in the eyes of the poor and humble Napoleon was the symbol of the French Revolution. Devotion to the principles of liberty and equality helped men to endure privation. They feared that a change to a new order of things would be accompanied by the re-establishment of privilege, abrogated since the Revolution.

Napoleon was well aware of the existence of these different sentiments. Going out one morning I was astonished at hearing a street organ play a tune which I had not heard for years, a tune for some time prohibited. It was the "Marseillaise," and it was being played by the

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emperor's orders, as Regnault informed me that very same day. I heard this war hymn several times in the public thoroughfares. It seemed to say that the moment had once more come for great deeds.

In the immortal campaign in France, which with the Italian campaign is regarded as Napoleon's military masterpiece, Marshal Ney had no fixed command. He was generally with the emperor, who had thought of him as being the right man to stir up the people of Lorraine, and lead them against the rear of the enemy. The burning patriotism of the frontier population, their love of bearing arms, and their admiration for Marshal Ney would—if he had been given command over them—have resulted in the infliction of serious damage upon the invaders.

The advice of Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angély and the categorical wish of Ney notwithstanding, in the beginning of February I made a short excursion, in my men's clothes, to the scene of the conflict. Occasionally mingling with our troops I was exposed to real dangers. At Château-Thierry the inhabitants of the town joined with the soldiers in chasing away the enemy, who had misbehaved grievously in every house they visited. The citizens of Château-Thierry organized into a volunteer corps that fought with extraordinary skill and courage. I remember taking a meal with some peasants in the district who, though ruined by the war, had remained invincibly loyal to Napoleon.

Ney became apprized of my presence in the army. He sent me a message that I must return to Paris without delay if I did not want to be taken back by force—between two soldiers. I was worn out into the bargain, I had had my fill of camp accommodation, and the weather was abominable. I had been obliged to ride across country and through filthy bogs. My horse was limping. So I started back to Paris. At la

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Ferté I met a peasant leading two horses. I asked him if he would sell one. He assented, offering me the animal for sixty francs. It was worth twenty times that amount. He helped me to saddle my new steed, the while vaunting its points. Then, with a sudden look at me, he said:

"But, Sir, you are a woman!"

"Yes, I am a woman. But I have been under fire, and am afraid of nothing and nobody!"

This speech seemed to make an impression on the man. He accompanied me for some distance, and only left me after putting me on a good road. At Meaux I hired a conveyance. On the 16th of February I was in Paris again.

I found the capital changed once more. To the former restlessness and alarm confidence had succeeded. The news of the victories at Champaubert, Montmirail, Château-Thierry, followed by other bulletins of like tenor, had roused the lower and middle classes to an inconceivable state of exaltation. Everyone thought peace was at hand. Napoleon's genius, it was said, had forced the hand of success.

Thus the remainder of February and the first of March went by. The city was ready to plunge into amusements. The carnival was extremely gay. There were crowds on the boulevards to see the processions of masquers, who were joyfully applauded. There was dancing everywhere; at the opera, where the balls were more brilliant than ever, at Vauxhall, at the Tarare, at the Rue Saint-Honoré circus. The Théâtre Français, the Ambigu, the Vaudeville, the Gaité, the Varietiés, all the principal theatres were filled every night. Topical pieces were given. Many of the spectators came in the uniform of the national guard. And then there were military reviews and parades. On the 27th of February, which was a Sunday, I witnessed an imposing ceremony

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in the Cour du Carrousel. Empress Marie-Louise, the King of Rome by her side, reviewed the garrison of Paris, detachments of the imperial guard, the line, and the national guard. Hereupon, in the throne room, and surrounded by the ministers and great officers of state, she received the standards of the enemy—Austrian, Prussian and Russian—captured since the beginning of the campaign, and destined to be hung in the national home for old soldiers, the "Invalides."

But this fictitious and illusive security was not sufficient to cause a revival of trade, although it found an echo in the stock market. Government bonds, which by the last of January had fallen to forty-seven francs, went up ten points in one month on the strength of the prospect of peace, the emperor's victories, the arrival of the Duke of Vicenza at Chatillon, the report of an armistice, Blucher's retreat, and so on. For a few days it was even noised about that the allies were about to evacuate the country. Alas! it was all vain deception!

Meanwhile peace negotiations were proceeding at Chatillon between the Duke of Vicenza (on behalf of the emperor) and the plenipotentiaries of the allies.

The struggle continued. Ney fought several battles with varying success against the Austrians and Russians. But at last Napoleon was compelled to recognize the futility of attacking the tremendous army of the allies in front. He, therefore, concluded it would be best to make an onslaught upon their rear at Saint-Dizier. The enemy, however, marched on toward Paris. Napoleon hastened back by way of Troyes and Sens, hoping that if the capital made a desperate resistance he might reach it in time to rescue it. But he arrived too late.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE CAPITAL IN DANGER — MARIE-LOUISE AND THE KING OF ROME LEAVE THE TUILERIES — KING JOSEPH'S HOPEFUL PROCLAMATION — THE BATTLE OF PARIS — MARSHAL MONCEY'S GALLANT DEFENCE — CAPITULATION — "OUR GOOD FRIENDS THE ENEMIES" — NAPOLEON SURROUNDED BY THE ALLIES AT FONTAINEBLEAU — HE ATTEMPTS SUICIDE — SIGNS THE TREATY OF ABDICATION — FAREWELL TO HIS SOLDIERS IN THE COURTYARD AT FONTAINEBLEAU —IDA'S RESENTMENT AGAINST NEY FOR ADVISING THE ABDICATION.

THE most disastrous tidings reached Paris at the end of March. Marshals Mortier and Marmont had suffered a terrible defeat at la Fère-Champenoise, and were doubling back in haste upon the metropolis, with the army of the allies in hot pursuit. At the same time came the news of the almost total annihilation, near La Fère-Champenoise, of a division of "Marie-Louise" troops, belonging to the young national guard from the Isle-de-France and Normandy. Many of them were still ununiformed, and fired their muskets in short jacket, wooden shoes, and soft broad-brimmed hat. They made a heroic fight, for a whole day, withstanding, as they gradually retreated over the seven-mile stretch of country, the attacks of twenty thousand Russian horsemen and the fire of a strong detachment of artillery. In the morning they had numbered four thousand, By the evening two thousand were killed, and five hundred

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had escaped to the swamps, where they were safe from the enemy. Of the fifteen hundred who surrendered at night nearly all were wounded.

Every day larger numbers of peasants arrived at the gates of Paris from the neighbouring districts, making their way into the city with their cattle and their household goods loaded on carts. This was a sure sign that the allies were near. The unhappy creatures established themselves as well as they could in the suburbs.

Full of the anxiety to which everyone was a prey, and apprehensive as to the fate of Ney and my friends, I often went to the general post-office for news. It was here that couriers and other travellers from the outside drew rein. I met various people of importance here, come from the same motives as mine, among them the Baron de Meneval, and M. de Bourrienne, whom the former had just then replaced as secretary to the emperor.

I witnessed, at eleven o'clock on the morning of March 29th, the departure from the Tuileries of the empress-regent and her son the King of Rome. The mournful procession left the Tuileries by the Pont Royal gate. Ten heavy green Berlin coaches, with the imperial arms painted on the door panels, the coronation coach encased in a linen cover, a mass of carriages and baggage vans, and an escort of two battalions of infantry and a squadron of cavalry, all filed out past a group of silent, gloomy spectators, crossed the Place de la Concorde, went up the Champs Elysées and into the Bois de Boulogne, and then took the road to Blois.

The leave-taking was very touching. The officers of the national guard on duty at the palace came to beg the empress to stay, vowing to defend her to their last drop of blood. Queen Hortense, forgetting that Marie-Louise had taken her mother's place, urgently pressed the regent not to go. In accents of prophetic conviction she said:

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THE KING OF ROME (DUKE DE REICHSTADT), NAPOLEON'S SON
(*Engraved by Dosselmann*)

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"If you quit the Tuileries, you will never see them again."

The little King of Rome showed the most strenuous unwillingness to leaving the palace. He obstinately refused, although usually so gentle, docile and obedient. The lamentations of the infant king were heartrending. He continued to repeat:

"My father told me I must not go!"

He had to be removed by force. The onlookers were all in tears.

When the news of the departure of the empress and the King of Rome became public, vast crowds gathered in the streets. Everyone expressed astonishment and indignation at this flight, which seemed a confession that all hope was lost. A proclamation by King Joseph issued in the afternoon revived the popular spirit. The document was thus worded:

"Citizens of Paris: A hostile column is advancing from the German frontier. The emperor is in pursuit at the head of a victorious army. The Council of Regency has seen to the safety of the empress and the King of Rome. I remain with you. Let us arm to defend the city. The emperor is marching to our aid. Second him by a short and vigorous resistance, and let us preserve the honour of the French name."

The growling of cannon was heard from the direction of Bondy. The inhabitants of some of the small towns came fleeing into Paris, saying that the Cossacks were at their heels. The next day the fate of the capital was to be decided.

I spent the whole of that day away from home, deeply stirred by the scenes I had witnessed, fearing greatly for the capital, knowing how inadequate were the preparations for defence. During the emperor's absence, confusion had reigned in the government, especially in the war department. Management, organization, and

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munitions were lacking. The populace, however, were eager to fight. All night the general alarm had sounded. The students of the Alfort and Polytechnic schools, the cadets of the imperial guard, and numerous volunteers marched out to reinforce Marmont and Mortier, whose troops held the space between the Seine and the Marne, the battlefield of the morrow. Loopholed palisades had been erected at the gates. The national guard assembled in haste. They manned the western sections of the defence, having a battalion at Batignolles, near Marshal Moncey's headquarters at the Barrière Clichy. They also guarded the approaches from Saint-Denis and Neuilly.

Under these circumstances did the battle of Paris open. The defending army numbered fifty thousand men all told, of whom only fifteen thousand belonged to the regular army. They had at least a hundred and twenty thousand foes to meet. In spite of this huge disparity in numbers they offered heroic resistance for several hours. The cannonading began in the morning, inflicting severe losses upon the allies. The front of the battle extended along the line between the Rue de la Révolte, through five suburbs, to Romainville, where the enemy did their worst. The plateau at this place was an important military position, and was taken and retaken several times. At the Barrière de Clichy old Marshal Moncey, second in command of the Parisian national guard, his son Albert, who was at his side as his chief-of-staff; patriotic authors and artists, such as Mauguin, Charlet, Horace Vernet and others—all these opposed the insults of the enemy with the most obstinate bravery. Only the sound of the parliamentary trumpet could check the valour of the heroic marshal, who up to the last moment offered a gallant defence that the people of Paris will never forget. The garrison was in hourly expectation of Napoleon's arrival, the supreme hope of the in-

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vaded country. During the morning rumors to that effect were passed along the line of battle. Shouts of "Long live the emperor!" were heard. But, alas, the news was false.

At noon King Joseph, who had watched the battle from the Montmartre hill, unmindful of his sacred duties of a prince, a soldier, and a Frenchman, sent word to Marshal Marmont to enter into negotiations with the enemy for the capitulation of Paris, which he feared to see given over to pillage. This, although not one of our positions was as yet lost, and the allies had at no single point penetrated into the city, which could have withstood their attack for at least two days longer.

The fact of the capitulation was public even before it had been given finality by the signatures of Marmont and the Russian plenipotentiaries. I had gone up to the Faubourg Saint-Martin to find out the news. The cannonading had ceased entirely, and the firing of small arms was restricted to the extreme left, in the region of the Barrière de l'Etoile. What was happening? Mingling in the crowd, I heard that the French troops had been ordered from their posts in the fighting line, and were sorrowfully marching down the outer boulevards. The allies were establishing themselves close to the city gates. Their regimental bands played lively tunes which were audible at a distance and which were interspersed with cheers. The sacrifice was consummated.

I went home and wept bitter tears over our lost military honour, over the shame of the occupation of our capital by foreigners. The next day I remained shut up at home. I did not see the parade of the Russians, Austrians and Prussians from the Barrière Pantin through the Faubourg Saint-Martin to the Champs Elysées, where the grand review took place. My friends told me that in the lower-class district the foreign soldiers were greeted with sullen silence, empty windows and closed shops.

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After passing the Porte Saint-Denis, some shouts were heard of "Long live the Emperor Alexander" and "Long live the allies!" The patriots protested by their silence. But in the aristocratic quarters these shouts became more frequent. There they were intermingled with other shouts, "Long live the king," and "Long live our good friends the enemies!" These were the exclamations of the delirious royalists, who had joined the ranks of the allies, and were acclaiming their troops. Oh, shame!

During the march past some fine ladies belonging to the Faubourg Saint-Germain, among them Talleyrand's niece, the Countess Diana de Périgord, mounted on the croups of the horses of the staff officers and the tsar's Cossacks, so as to see and applaud better. After the review, the Emperor Alexander repaired to the Prince de Talleyrand's palace, in the Rue Saint-Florentine, where apartments had been reserved for him. There were the intrigues of the royalists hatched out; there was the fall of the empire plotted, and there did it ripen to fruition.

The emperor, meanwhile, was only four miles from his capital. He was rushing toward it with the full speed of his post horses, when he met a regiment of cavalry moving out in virtue of the armistice. Napoleon at first wanted to go on, to proceed to the Tuileries, declare the armistice void, resume command of the army, begin the fight over again, and so on. But he finally decided to make for Fontainebleau, where he arrived on the morning of March 31st at the same hour at which the allies were entering Paris.

On the 14th of April *The Moniteur* published the formal declarations of allegiance—first to the provisional government and then to Louis XVIII.—of Marshals Augereau, Oudinot, Kellermann and Lefebvre, and of a quantity of generals. In revolutionary times human baseness seems to descend several degrees below its usual level.

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JOSEPH BONAPARTE, KING OF SPAIN

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The soldiers did not so readily assent to the new order of things. When Napoleon's abdication was read out to the troops at Fontainebleau, it provoked an outburst of wrath and indignation resulting in a demonstration which I, having in the meantime gone to Fontainebleau, happened to see. One night in April the soldiers of both the old and the young guard broke into mutiny, poured out from their barracks in arms, rioted about the town, and started for the castle with cries of "Long live the emperor! Down with the traitors! To Paris!" The officers had all they could do to make them return to their quarters.

The allies were losing no time. While the negotiations were in progress at Paris the foreign troops had closed in. The vicinity of Fontainebleau was occupied by them. The Russians stretched along the right bank of the Seine, and the Austrians had taken up a position between Essonnes and Paris. Other forces barred the roads to Chartres and Orleans. The French army was surrounded by a vast net, whose meshes were daily being drawn tighter. At any given moment a hundred and fifty thousand men were ready to fall upon the small contingent that still guarded Napoleon. These were days of great tribulation. At Fontainebleau I was lodged in the castle itself; unobserved owing to the stir and comfusion, in profound grief over the fall of everything that had for so many years been inexpressibly dear to me; taking part with broken spirit in the funeral of the empire I had known so glorious and so mighty! On the 11th of April the negotiations were completed at Paris. The emperor's plenipotentiaries had obtained an agreement that the allied troops should cease their advance upon Fontainebleau. The pecuniary arrangements relative to Napoleon and his family were settled. Despite the efforts of the French commissioners, who wished Napoleon to be sent to Saint Helena, or at the very least to Corfu

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or Corsica, the will of the Emperor Alexander prevailed, and the principality of Elba was bestowed upon Napoleon, to be held by him for the rest of his life, as sovereign and proprietor. To make this treaty valid nothing more was requisite than the emperor's signature.

At the supreme moment Napoleon, who until then had endured with apparently stoical resignation the blows that were smiting him and the collapse of his imperial power, Napoleon, who had always shown himself superior to the frowns of misfortune, now gave way to utter despair. After interviewing Caulaincourt and Macdonald upon their return from Paris, on the afternoon of April the 12th, weakness got the better of this remarkable man's usual strength of soul. He wanted to end his life. The memory of that awful night is ineffaceably engraved in my mind.

I had retired very late, and had thrown myself upon a lounge with all my clothes on. All was still in the castle. I was suddenly aroused by unwonted noises. Lights were being carried to and fro, and servants were bustling about. It was then three o'clock in the morning. Someone rode out of the courtyard at a rapid trot. It was one of the emperor's surgeons. I was seized with mortal terror. I rushed to the emperor's apartments, under the pretext of wishing to speak to one of his servants, saw M. de Turenne, the master of the wardrobe, in a strange state of excitement and heard the word "poisoned" distinctly repeated twice. Luckily General Bertrand made his appearance. His tranquil manner was the best guarantee that no fears need be entertained for the emperor's life.

I was informed that the evening before Napoleon had sent for his doctor, Ivan, and by force of threats had obliged him to say what dose of opium would kill a man. Napoleon always had some of the drug in a small medicine case. He put the amount indicated into a cup of

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tea. But it proved to be an overdose. He vomited, and so threw up the poison he had swallowed. Then he suffered from convulsions all through the night. But when morning came he was saved.

At nine o'clock, by which time the rumours were spreading through the ranks of the grenadiers of his guard, I began to fear an insurrection. The soldiers were accusing the allies of poisoning the emperor, and wanted to carry him off, and keep him in their midst, where he would be safe from danger.

Reawakened to his sense of moral greatness by the failure of his attempt upon his own life, Napoleon resolved to submit to his fate, since, forsaken by all, he could not even find refuge in death. Thus he at last consented to ratify the engagements made in his name. He signed the treaty at Fontainebleau, which had been concluded at Paris on the 11th of April, but not without showing a glimpse of the conflicts warring within his proud soul. He said to Caulaincourt as he handed the the signed treaty to him:

"The money clauses humiliate me. I am only a soldier. I can live on a louis a day. Tell the allied sovereigns, be sure to tell them in my name, Caulaincourt, that I am treating with a victorious enemy, not with a provisional government in which I see nothing but a committee of malcontents and traitors!"

In all the successive defections which had so quickly thinned the ranks of the courtiers who had once served Napoleon so eagerly, honour and fidelity had not deserted the army at large. Officers and soldiers repined at not having been allowed to spill their last drop of blood in delivering their emperor and driving the strangers out of the country. All the old veterans, whose faces had been browned by the suns of Egypt or their limbs frozen in the wintry North, in the hour of darkness remained true to the chief who had so often led them

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to victory. In accordance with the treaty four hundred of his soldiers were to be permitted to accompany Napoleon. Nevertheless, his whole guard wanted to go with him into exile. They vied with each other in urging seniority and length of service and quantity of stripes as qualifications entitling them to share with their emperor the sojourn and the bread of banishment. "Good fellows! good fellows!" said the emperor with emotion. "Why cannot I take them all?"

It was to these picked men of the nation, to these truly French hearts, that the fallen monarch elected to bid his last farewell. The 20th of April had been fixed as the date of his departure. The imperial guard was drawn up in the courtyard of the castle. The painter's art has preserved the memorable scene to all generations. It has faithfully represented the actors. But what brush could ever depict the dull despair speaking from the faces of those old comrades in glory? Their eyes were lowered to the ground. The emperor was pale. His voice was uncertain. When, in the course of his address he said: "Some of my generals have failed in their duty," a murmur ran through the whole of the ranks. A quick glance from Napoleon to General Petit and the first row of his guard convinced me how well he had appreciated the spontaneous tremor of those devoted men, upon which a deadly silence had followed. When Napoleon embraced General Petit it was a sacred moment, if I may say so. The grenadiers presented arms with tears in their eyes. The standard-bearer, who was close to the emperor, lost countenance altogether and burst into sobs.

General Bertrand got into a carriage with Napoleon. A small escort followed; four commissioners belonging to the allied powers, a Russian, an Austrian, an Englishman and a Prussian, accompanied the ex-emperor. Their mission was to protect Napoleon on his passage through

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NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL IN THE COURTYARD AT FONTAINEBLEAU
(From the Painting by Horace Vernet)

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the foreign lines, against the overheated passions of the royalist agents, and against the criminal designs of certain members of the government originating from the southern provinces of France. The emperor's life was seriously threatened and the journey was not absolved without dangerous happenings.

Two hours after his departure from Fontainebleau, I was in a carriage on my way to Paris.

At the city limits I was obliged to alight and show my passport, which I always kept in good order, in my pocketbook.

"Where do you come from?"

"Fontainebleau."

"Were you attached to Napoleon?"

"By inclination, not by service."

After a few moments' discussion I was allowed to pass on. I had my slender luggage deposited at the Hôtel du Buloi.

My heart was oppressed. Although an eyewitness of the great events of Fontainebleau, and having myself seen the eagle's fall, yet I could scarcely realize the actuality of the great catastrophe. The sight of Paris was painful to me. I went about everywhere, but could find consolation nowhere. I had not yet seen Marshal Ney. A presentiment of some sort about him disquieted me. I felt an imperative desire to ask him face to face what he had said to the emperor at their last interview, which had been so variously commented upon. At last, after I had been back in Paris several days, we met.

It was a singular encounter. We were both embarrassed. I had been told the day before that not only had Ney, like the other marshals, kept all his titles, so gloriously won, but that he had been promised more. To all appearances he seemed to be firmly established in the good graces of his new masters. That this was really the case I thought scarcely credible. In spite of all the diffidence I felt, however, and though I wished the

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best terms to prevail between us, I bluntly asked him whether it was true that he had advised the emperor to abdicate.

"Yes," he replied, "I was compelled to do so."

"What, Ney, did you tell Napoleon such bitter truths, when his misfortune would have justified their being softened?"

"Truths they were, yes; but I spoke no bitter words. I only expressed my opinion with all the frankness which is natural to my character. Yes, I advised him to abdicate. Before the emperor there was France to be considered. I have explained my views to you on that subject many a time. The men who govern are nothing to me. I care only for my country!"

He then left me. Our conversation had been frigid and constrained. The greatest charm of our intimacy, our sympathetic enthusiasm in a common cause, was gone. Our friendship thus to some degree lacked the fuel which had kept it warm.

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CHAPTER XV

LAZARE CARNOT, A REAL REPUBLICAN — AND AN UPRIGHT MAN — AND A PATRIOTIC CITIZEN — HE COMPARES NAPOLEON WITH CÆSAR AND WASHINGTON — A POLITICAL BREAKFAST PARTY — AT WHICH THE "CONTEMPORARY" IS GIVEN A SECRET MISSION — HER JOURNEY TO ELBA — REMINISCENCES, BY THE WAY, OF NAPOLEON'S JOURNEY THITHER — HOW HE ESCAPED HANGING — THE EX-EMPEROR'S ACTIVITY AS A LANDLORD — HE TELLS THE AUTHORESS OF HIS DREAM OF A MEDITERRANEAN KINGDOM—HIS STATUS IN EXILE AS A SOVEREIGN — OFFICIALS OF HIS COURT IN ELBA.

I HAVE not so far spoken of Carnot in my memoirs, because, although I had known him a long time, I could not before arriving at a mature age fully appreciate such an unusual character as his. In the whirlwind of my youth, successes and follies, I had little inclination to pause before that stern figure. He excluded himself from frivolous, ostentatious society, and did not wish to see the Republic in fine clothes.

The French Cato, as he was called, was far from prepossessing. He had a long, solemn, hairless face. But it was he who, silently, from the seclusion of his study in the department of public safety, had organized the military forces of France, and had hurled at Europe the fourteen armies of the Convention that had enabled us to beat the whole continent. This was why I looked

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upon Carnot with the curiosity which an antique medal arouses, representing some illustrious personage.

Carnot, once an engineer officer, had disciplined the early activity of his mind with the study of the exact sciences. Solitude, meditation, and intellectual speculation naturally set him in quest of new ideas. The Republic was a problem he had long been pondering, and which he thought to have solved. He reached the point of enthusiasm by the road of deep reflection; he reduced society to an equation, and when certain of his conclusions became all ardour on the subject. With most men reason tempers the transports of an impetuous spirit. In Carnot's case reason was in a manner the secret fire which kept his blood aglow. His conduct during the Revolution has been the substance of much comment. I do not pretend to judge either that conduct or its motives. Himself explained it in saying "I signed without reading." But I am inwardly convinced that Carnot did nothing but what was strictly righteous in his own sight. Good and simple in heart, he never served any personal interests; with him the individual always disappeared in the citizen. He was of a grave cast of mind, by nature inimical to futile gaiety and amusements, but full of kind indulgence for the weaknesses of his friends. By a singular anomaly, this man, whom one would have believed quite absorbed in scientific lore, and whose political theories were all based upon abstract ideas, also busied himself with literature. This bold republican wrote little poems. So that the Brutus of the forum was something of a Deshoulières at home.

My intercourse with Carnot was more than once interrupted, but was as often renewed through his kind indulgence. After my return from Italy I learnt through some officers how generously Carnot had offered the use of his abilities and his sword to the unfortunate Napoleon, in the time of his country's distress, immolating the

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republican pride from which he had never swerved while the imperial star was in the ascendant. Turning from the spectacle of general ingratitude and vileness, I felt that my heart would be solaced by a visit to the defender of Antwerp and stricken France. Carnot seemed sensible to my regard, which I pushed so far as to substitute "Citizen" for "Sir," in conversation, which brought back memories of his younger days to him. He was good enough to enquire about my situation, and asked how I had fared since our last interview, dating several years back. I told him that the loss of my illusions had made me take to travel.

"Well, as for myself," said Carnot hereupon, "to seek relief from my political disappointments I took refuge in solitude. In quiet retreat among my books I was not carried away by the brilliant vagaries of a despot who might have been incomparable, like Washington, but who preferred to be only great, like Cæsar. Let us not speak ill of him, however; he is fallen. There is no more danger to be feared from that side. If I offered my services to Napoleon, it was because I could not bear the thought of being idle when my country was in trouble."

We then talked of the past and the future. Our common reminiscences taking us back to the great Revolutionary era, Carnot conferred the special favour upon me of reading aloud to me his own justification of his conduct during the Revolution. Everyone has read those engrossing pages, which, by the emperor's orders and the activity of the minister of police, were distributed in profusion during the Hundred Days. Carnot's pamphlet was for sale in the streets, piled up in small carts, like vegetables or fruit, and was obtainable from the abundant vendors for a very moderate sum.

I was much flattered at the interest Carnot seemed to take in my opinion. If a woman has a few brains in

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her head, and does not try to manifest her own importance, it is astonishing—sometimes incredible—what will be confided to her by men of the highest order. I have been well acquainted, in my time, with many distinguished men. With all of them, Carnot excepted, I found that ambition or the pride of rank obscured the integrity of their views. Carnot, on the other hand, whether in private, or with the army, or in public debate, was always the same staunch republican, stiffnecked perhaps, but disinterested. Besides the pamphlet I have referred to, Carnot read me some of his verses. One of the poems was afterwards set to music by the composer Romagnesi.

Carnot was aware that I was still in correspondence with the former secretary of Herault de Sechelles, Neillard, whom he held in high esteem, and who was at that time living in retirement in Provence. Fearing Carnot's disapproval, I said nothing to him of a project to visit Elba which I had been revolving in my mind. I merely told him I intended to take a journey to Marseilles, Toulon, Digne, Draguinan, and perhaps a few other places. He asked me to come again before I left, saying he would have some letters ready for his friends in the south. I gladly promised to act as Carnot's messenger, and we parted very good friends.

I had been nursing the idea of the pilgrimage to Elba with enthusiasm. But sometimes the execution of a resolve is deferred through trivial reasons. Money——that sinew of war—and travelling were becoming of some consideration to me. While by way of precaution I was trying to replenish my exchequer, I received from Regnault a pressing invitation to breakfast, including his request that I come early. According to my usual wont, I entered by the Rue de la Victoire pavilion, expecting to find myself in a small circle of intimates. To my surprise there was a large gathering entirely composed of men, the countess being absent from Paris. So

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CARNOT
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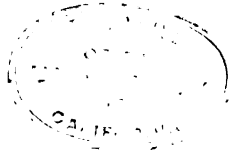

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I was to take part in a veritable bachelors' breakfast. Perhaps not much attention would have been paid to me had not a relative of General Cavaignac insisted on talking to me about Murat and Elisa, whom he knew I had been acquainted with. He rambled on about my campaigns forever, which among all these real soldiers was most embarrassing. The most boisterous among the guests, he whose language was the least diplomatic, was Charles de Labédoyère. He was to go back that same night to his regiment. He had come to Paris without leave of absence and without the knowledge of his commanding officer. It was on this occasion that our acquaintance grew into friendship as the outcome of the half-confidences that passed between us and the sympathies which we shared.

General Cambacérès, the archchancellor's brother, also took part in the breakfast. He said very little. This was not so with the remainder of the guests, whose daring observations upon politics surpassed anything I could have imagined. Six months had elapsed and already most of those who had abandoned Fontainebleau too precipitately, or had gleefully welcomed the emperor's abdication because of the opportunity it afforded for the essaying of other ideas, not only were now beginning to repent, but were making common cause with the people whose conservative love of the past was allied to definite hopes for the future. Regnault's breakfast party was dreadfully political. Between the courses all the dynasties of Europe were sliced up. Above all the other voices Labédoyère's rang out like a clarion. Amid all the political vapouring I, however, suspected the likelihood of some direct inspiration from Napoleon, who was perhaps designing some plan to get back the power he had but recently signed away at Fontainebleau. Regnault, who knew very well that any attempt to elicit information from me about Ney would be futile, did not

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once mention his name in the counting up of all the celebrities passed in review in the speculations of the company relating to the new government.

At last the guests departed, and I found myself alone with Regnault, Labédoyère and Cambacérès. They continued the political debate, but—without openly committing themselves—included hints plain enough to be understood by the Contemporary. I then perceived why I had been invited, and I showed that I comprehended what was required of me. Immediately the conversation was changed to other topics. General Cambacérès when he withdrew took leave of me with the air of appreciation one might display towards a person whom one wished to thank for a service to be rendered. Labédoyère, too, evidently thought I was more deeply initiated in political secrets than I professed to be, or even really was. When the two had gone, Regnault told me precisely what it was that he and his friends wanted me to do. I promised to perform the confidential mission entrusted to me with all the fidelity I was capable of. I would start without needless delay, I said, since the question of money, the only consideration that could have held me back, was resolved.

Thus was my pilgrimage to Elba arranged. My travelling purse contained six thousand francs. In order to forestall inquiries to which my departure might perhaps have given rise, I spread the report that I intended to make a sojourn in the vicinity of Paris. Before getting into my carriage I wrote a letter to Regnault saying that on receipt of it I should already be on my way to Fontainebleau.

I followed the same route as that taken by the emperor on his journey to the island of Elba. At various places at which I stopped the people with proud affection spoke of the emperor as having said so-and-so "here."

"It was here," a young girl informed me at Briare, that

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the carriages were separated for the want of horses. The first carriage went on, but the emperor stayed behind until night.

"No, you are mistaken, Toinette. The emperor left at noon. I know better than you because I saw him eating with two German or English blackguards," was the answer of an older woman.

How difficult it must be to come at the exact truth of the great facts of history. The witnesses of a trivial occurrence cannot even agree on what happened if only a few months have passed since the event.

At Nevers I was told how much Napoleon had seemed consoled by the ovations which had greeted him all along the road from Fontainebleau.

"But it was not the same with the foreign commissioners," a fair patriotess remarked, with a malicious smile. "They were sworn at and hooted."

At Villeneuve-sur-Allier the people said, with tears in their eyes:

"Here the emperor was obliged to part from the last detachment of the faithful guard that was his escort. He refused the Cossacks and Germans who were offered, saying loudly:

"I want no escort now! My grenadiers were my friends; no one can fill their place."

At Orange and at Avignon the passing carriages were saluted with cries of "Long live the king! Down with Nicolas! Long live the allies!"

While the horses were being changed at the relay station of Orgon, a royalist riot exploded, which had been fomented by agents sent from Paris. In anticipation of the ex-emperor's arrival, the country folk had hung up a mannikin on the lamppost at the very door of the inn, this dummy being intended to represent Napoleon. The charming inhabitants of Orgon were fully disposed to replace the effigy with the reality. The

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whole furious village mob surrounded the carriages, bellowing the filthiest epithets at Napoleon in patois. If the emperor had got out, which the ferocious peasants —incited by the agents—tried to make him do, he would surely have been killed. Recognizing the peril of his situation, the commissioners speedily alighted from their carriages and placed themselves between the mob and the emperor who, with knitted brow, but otherwise calmly composed, watched the outrageous demonstrations against him. As soon as the postillions had finished harnessing their animals they jumped into their saddles and started off at a gallop. Several volleys of stones were aimed by the miscreants at the vanishing imperial coach, which luckily escaped without serious damage.

The emperor had embarked at the port of Saint-Raphen on the 29th of April, 1814, under escort of some Austrian soldiers. And there also I took ship for Elba, at the end of the month of November, in the same year. In order to obviate the suspicions that a disguise might have evoked, I had resumed female garments. After Orgon I had not stopped again before reaching le Luc, at which spot General Bertrand had presented to Princess Pauline the foreign commissioners accompanying her brother in his exit from his domains. Pauline was to join Napoleon in Elba. So I quitted French territory at Saint-Raphen where, fifteen years before, Bonaparte had landed after the expedition to Egypt. I was obliged to wait until the next day, on account of stormy weather, and then, after a two days' sail, the island of Elba came in sight.

It was not merely a desire to pay grateful homage to the unfortunate hero that took me to this island. The purpose of my voyage was another. But the secret is not mine, and I must therefore not disclose it.

Upon disembarking in the evening, I was taken by a person who met me to a very secluded country house.

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From this house, that had been selected for my quarters, was visible the tiny island of Pianosa, which was spoken of by Napoleon as his "last conquest." It had, in fact, since he had taken up his abode in Elba, ceased to be a camping ground for pirates.

From the day of the emperor's arrival, Napoleon's activity and inventiveness were made apparent to the astonished population of Elba. Napoleon's influence impressed itself upon all his surroundings. Good roads were laid, new mines were opened, ground was cleared and planted, new edifices were erected, The sovereign's palace at Porto Longone was situated on a rock between the Falcon and Star forts, at the salient angle of the bastion. When he first came the palace consisted of two main buildings, which served the higher engineer and artillery officers as lodgings. The emperor ordered these buildings to be joined by another. On the first floor of this was established a magnificent ballroom, adjoined by Princess Pauline's apartments. The emperor occupied the ground floor of the palace, and his mother, who likewise had come to live on the island, resided in the town of Porto Ferraio. Near the palace were old tumble-down houses and mills. These, together with a large building long fallen into disuse but close to the imperial dwelling, were pulled down. Everything was razed to the level of the terrace made in front of the palace, which thus commanded a free view in every direction.

My passport designated me as a Pole, and my servants wore the costume of that nation, The mystery of my arrival, the circumstances of my reception, a certain dignity of deportment learnt in society and by no means impaired through stage experience—it was this perhaps that set tongues wagging in the island. The report was spread that a woman and a young child, both dear to the emperor, had made their appearance. This fable threw a public glamour over me which disturbed my plan, and

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which compelled me to finish my mission as soon as possible. I spent but three days in Elba.

Napoleon passed much of his time in visiting his miniature states, putting all his wonted ardour into that pursuit. He rode out on horseback every day. I waylaid him as he was nearing a high point of the island.

"What!" he exclaimed, as though he had not been expecting me, "*fama volat* as far as Barataria?"

"Where do you suppose fame would stop if she were flying after the Emperor Napoleon?"

Such was my reply. I then asked the emperor to grant me a private audience. He assigned me the hour of two in the afternoon, at Saint-Martin, his country seat.

"Be sure to come," he urged me.

We rode on together to the top of the hill. The wide blue belt of the sea, encircling the island, lay shining at our feet as it were. Some frigates of war were cruising in the distance.

"Behold my empire!" said Napoleon, with a scornful smile.

"Why?" I answered, scanning the whole round of the horizon at a glance, "it is as large as the world! Over there is France, and over there is Italy, and is not Africa in that direction?"

"Africa? Ah, Africa was the dream of my childhood! I was in love with it when my mother used to tell me about King Theodore. I sometimes thought I would like to be King of the Mediterranean islands. What a beautiful dream! I might have demolished the pirates, like Pompey; driven back the people of the Barbary states into the interior; crushed out the slave trade; civilized Egypt; pushed the Turks back into Asia; given the Greeks a government and a country of their own; maintained the balance between the marine powers of the world in humbling the pride of England! But it was only a dream!"

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CAMBRONNE.

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Then the emperor was silent, and gave himself up to meditation.

The estate of Saint-Martin, where I was given audience by the emperor, had through him been acquired on Princess Pauline Borghese's account. Upon it stood a little house, of pretty, picturesque aspect, in the middle of a spacious vineyard. Nearly every day, whatever the weather might be, Napoleon went walking about the estate. As a good landlord he did not disdain to supervise the management of the place, had complete reports rendered him, and entered into their smallest details.

He had had the house enlarged and furnished with simplicity and good taste. The walls, as they usually are in Italy, were painted with frescoes. Upon the walls of the dining-room the emperor had caused to be hung handsome pictures illustrating the Egyptian campaign, which made the room look as if it were part of a museum. It was here that Napoleon deigned to receive me the next day, and to thank me in gracious terms, worthy a sovereign, for my personal devotion to him.

His court at Elba was not numerous, it counted only about thirty persons, including natives.

Napoleon being a reigning sovereign, acknowledged by all the powers, he had not resigned the privileges of royalty. Thus, in obedience to etiquette, the four chief notables of the country were appointed chamberlains, while six young men from the best families of the island were attached to the emperor's person as orderly officers. The service of honour was regulated as it had been in France.

The day for receptions and audiences was Sunday, after mass.

Cambronne, marshal of the camp, immortalized by valiant conduct and a famous speech at Waterloo, attracted but little attention among the visitors who flocked to Elba. He had a martial countenance, it is

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true, but one which was not striking among a number of heroic faces, and which could not provoke especial comment or make an enduring impression on the memory.

The same cannot be said of the marshal of the palace, General Bertrand, whose name resounded in my ears on the shores of the Adriatic, in those Illyrian provinces over which he had been governor, and where he had left hearts full of esteem and gratitude. The expression of his face was rather gentle than grand, but it was easily seen that this very gentleness was the cover of a strong, stern soul. His bald forehead gave evidence of deep and serious thinking. Pensive and perhaps melancholy by nature, he was as wise as he was good.

General Drouot's physiognomy much resembled General Bertrand's. There was about him something reserved, religious, mystical, which inevitably called to mind the sacred profession for which, it was said, he had been trained in his youth, but from which patriotic fervour, and circumstances as well, had claimed him for the vocation of arms.

Upon quitting the island of Elba, my first notion was to land at Antibes, but the winds of heaven ordered otherwise. I set foot on the mainland at Marseilles.

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CHAPTER XVI

IDA'S FRIENDSHIP WITH GENERAL QUESNEL — HIS MYSTERIOUS ASSASSINATION — NAPOLEON SETS FOOT IN FRANCE AGAIN —NEY'S INCONSISTENCY EXCUSED — HIS DEFECTION FROM THE ANTI-NAPOLEON PARTY — REJOICINGS AT LONS LE SAULNIER OVER THE EMPEROR'S RETURN — NEY'S MEETING WITH NAPOLEON — THE MARSHAL EXPLAINS HIS CHANGE OF HEART — THE OVATION AT THE TUILERIES.

In spite of a fair passage I felt more fatigued by this little maritime journey than I would have been by a month of marching in the field. I remained at the Hôtel Beauveau, and investigated the state of public opinion. I found that at Marseilles, as everywhere else, thoughts of change were current. When I informed Regnault of this trend of mind upon my return to Paris, he rubbed his hands in a peculiar manner and said I was a prophetess.

Early in February of the year 1815 I received a letter from the marshal. In the course of his epistle he said:

"I propose to continue on my estate, but, my friend, I must urgently beg of you to observe prudence in your conduct." To this sentence he had added: "I do not expect to go back to Paris until I am summoned thither."

In replying, I thought it behooved me to record all the observations I had gathered during my journey to Elba. I remember his answer, which was very brief and categorical. I quote it:

"Whoever desires a change desires the ruin of France.

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Our sole want is peace. What matters it who governs? All that matters is France—her welfare and her dignity. Let us think of nothing but our country."

This self-same sentiment governed Ney's actions a few months later. But when he wrote me the above lines he believed, in all earnestness and sincerity, that Napoleon's return would signify a dreadful calamity.

In my former campaigning days I had known a young officer who had strongly attracted me, in the unusual circumstances of our acquaintance, by his striking appearance and his clever gallantry. This officer I had favoured above a number whom I had merely counted as amiable men; his name was Quesnel. Through one of the fortuitous happenings of those eventful times an intimacy begun in a ballroom at Paris had culminated on a battlefield. We had met in Italy, parted in Germany, and come together again in Poland. For a few years we had lost sight of each other, but those years and as many hundreds of miles which had separated us meant nothing at our fresh meeting; it was as if we had been together the day before. Only in the meantime Quesnel had become a general. When I first saw him he was a captain, I had afterwards met him as a colonel, and upon my return to Paris after the abdication at Fontainebleau I greeted him as general of division.

By the end of 1814, our renewed relations, maintained by frequent hours in one another's company and by mutual sympathies and sorrows, had however taken on a somewhat serious character. General Quesnel, a man of firm resolve and remarkable energy, was the soul of many gatherings that were rather political than social, though he had a capacity for reconciling these interests. I supposed him better initiated than myself in certain secrets whose general purport I knew more of than their exact content. Since at this time Ney was on his estate, and since my journey to Elba—of which

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he had expressed his disapproval—had resulted in the cooling of our communications, I had entire liberty in my already very independent manner of life. About the end of January or the beginning of February, 1815, I was at breakfast one morning with Quesnel, in the Rue de Rivoli. He was troubled and moody, and very sparing with his ordinarily enthusiastic and hopeful remarks.

"I am thinking of an audience, and it is causing me some anxiety," he confessed.

"With whom?"

"I am to have it with the Duke d'Angoulême."

"Good heavens! And are you too going to blaze one of those fierce proclamations at us full of 'tyrants' and 'usurpers'?"

"You seem to think you are talking to Augereau. You are mistaken, my dear friend."

I left him with dire presentiments in my breast. I was afterwards told by a friend of the general that he had seen him taking leave of a relative at the Carrousel gate at eleven o'clock on the night of the day I had breakfasted with him, and which day he was to have had a private interview with the duke. Quesnel's relative supposed he had gone to a place in the country near Paris—one of his favourite haunts. Inquiries were made if Quesnel had made his appearance there. I confided my apprehensions to Regnault, who answered:

"I have not seen Quesnel since his audience with the Duke d'Angoulême. But I am not surprised. He perhaps found himself in one of those delicate positions of which a man thinks he must bear the brunt himself."

I next met a former aide-de-camp of General Lasalle. He imparted a rumour to me as to Quesnel's being drowned. At this terrible news I nearly fainted.

"Poor Quesnel," the officer continued, "he may have been made a sacrifice of. His fearless tenacity was no secret. He knew too much, and was put out of the way."

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The next day, while in a café near the Pont Royal, I observed a sudden rush of all the guests to the door.

"There," said one of them, "goes the cart with General Quesnel's body, who was drowned."

"You mean," exclaimed a military man in civilian clothes, "whose throat was cut before he was pitched into the river!"

After leaving the café I turned the corner of the Rue de Bourbon, and entered the arcade of the Boulainvilliers market. Here I was unexpectedly confronted by the officer in plain clothes who had spoken in the café. He assured me that there was no doubt of Quesnel's having been murdered. He explained that the dagger employed had left traces of an intense struggle on the part of the victim and of the murderer's fierce persistency.

I was day by day becoming more involved in the intrigues brewing on behalf of Napoleon. Without ever asking the object of any of my missions, I fulfilled them all with the enthusiasm of a disinterested zeal. One morning Regnault handed me three letters, commissioning me to deliver them to a man who would accost me with the question: "How is your uncle?" My instructions were to wait for the said individual in the café of the Feydeau arcade until eleven o'clock. The letters were to be surrendered upon the exhibition of a medal. I went to the appointed place at half past nine. I was addressed by a man in the words mentioned, and gave up the letters as I had been ordered. The emissary sent to meet me I knew quite well. He was an officer of hussars, and he spoke exultingly of the emperor and the general expectation of his return. When I rendered account of my mission to Regnault, he muttered with ill-dissembled anger:

"These officers are chatterboxes. They fight like lions, but they gossip like women."

When the time came for Napoleon's reappearance,

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Regnault de S.t Jean Dangely.

the police were either blind or in collusion with his party. I even detected signs of intelligence among officers at a parade and under the king's very balcony. I remember breakfasting—early in March—in a café at the corner of the Rue d'Echelle, in the same room as some officers in civilian garb. They exchanged signs, showed one another cockades, real or fictitious manifestoes, etc.

I was unable to persuade myself that if Napoleon came back Ney would stay with the king. It was difficult to understand how the marshal would make the past square with the present. The last time I saw Regnault he referred to Ney again in a way that frightened me:

"He advised the abdication very harshly. I hardly know how the emperor would regard him now."

Regnault worshipped the emperor with such a stout faith that he looked upon him as a sort of demi-god armed with omnipotence.

In the meanwhile—on the first of March—Napoleon sailed into the Gulf of Napoule, and disembarked at Cannes. Three days after, I was awakened early in the morning, and a letter was put into my hands containing extracts from proclamations strewn all along the road. I hastened to Regnault with this letter. I found him more excited than myself, though the reasons of his emotion were different from mine. He seemed to be out of his wits. He held out one of the proclamations before him, shouting out incoherently, as he walked to and fro:

"General Marchand is at Grenoble! He is not fond of the emperor! Ney starts for Besançon! The disembarkation was a risky business! Napoleon did not foresee what he was undertaking!"

"Count," said I, "this is all like a dream!"

"Oh, no; it is the painful truth! But what did Ney tell you?"

"Ney believes Napoleon's return to be fatal to France.

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Regnault de S.t Jean Dangely.

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Ney is loyalty itself; he will oppose the emperor, you may be sure. That at least is his intention. Is he likely to change it?"

I then told Regnault that since Ney had departed for Besançon, I would go there myself to see if I could not bring him to look at affairs in a different light. Regnault approved the idea.

I set forth upon my impromptu journey of forty or forty-five hours asking myself what I should say to the marshal to make him change in his resolutions. And I also asked myself what manner of reception I should get. The spirit of the troops everywhere convinced me that Napoleon needed only to stand before them to be acclaimed. It was as if a powder train had been laid. At Lyons the tricolour had already been hoisted. Everything I saw and heard increased my fear on the score of Michael Ney. The emperor's return called forth in the people a burst of enthusiasm which in some of them was so deep as to find vent in tears of joy. Napoleon was proving to the cabinets of Europe that renown is a good title to a throne.

Had I been less well acquainted with Ney's character, the strange hostility that set in from the first day of the Restoration between his sentiments and his sense of duty would still be an inexplicable riddle to me. But in essaying to sketch this great soul, one of the most generous and loyal natures ever made, I am forced to acknowledge his defects. Under manners which were at times uncouth, Ney wore the gentlest and most docile of hearts. Capable of the warmest feelings of good will and affection, he gave rein to these emotions with an impetus which might be harmless enough in private life, but which might become dangerous where larger interests were involved. Everything he said he profoundly felt; evervthing he promised he firmly intended to carry out; everything that was his will he believed to be his desire indeed. Ney

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has been calumniated by persons accusing him of acting upon premeditated design. The idea of a fixed plan requiring facility in lying was utterly incompatible with the openness of heart and mind which always distinguished him. If he went so far as to forget his obligations towards the king, it was because behind the public opinion that condemned the Bourbon rule he saw the welfare of his country.

Ney was to be at Lons le Saulnier. When I inquired about his arrival, I was told he had already left two hours before. I seemed to be awakening from a dream.

I was in fact awakening. It was nine o'clock in the evening. From the "Golden Apple" I saw several illuminated windows with tricoloured banners floating from them. Animated crowds thronged the Rue Saint-Désiré and the market square. I listened, and caught the marshal's name. Lending yet closer ear, I heard dim shouts of "Long live the emperor!" and these shouts ran on in my direction until they resounded full and loud. I understood that the great thing had happened. The revolution was accomplished.

Desperate for knowledge of what part Ney had played on this historic day, I had one of the pretty young girls I had seen at the inn summoned to my room. She was the proprietor's daughter. With engaging simplicity and warmth she rendered me an account of the proceedings at Lons le Saulnier. The marshal did not declare his so-called "defection" in writing in the orders for the day. That document was only given out after he had read it aloud at the head of his troops at a place in Lons le Saulnier generally used for parades. The first sentence of his speech left no possible room for doubt. "Soldiers," said the marshal, "the cause of the Bourbons is lost forever!" This statement had a magical effect. The army repeated it from man to man, and their huge elation broke out into transports of joy. The white

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cockades and emblems of the lily vanished in the twinkling of an eye. Old veterans behaved like children. The infantry kissed their muskets, the cavalry hugged the necks of their horses. Ney was led to believe that the fate of France depended upon himself, and acted as he considered he ought, according to his conscience and reason, evidently determined not to give his country over to the terrible calamity of a civil war in which one-half of the army would have been pitted against the other.

The supper hour came. I went down to the dining-room, and looked out of the window. Fireworks were being shot off, and petards exploded in the square. Singing and shouts of joy were audible all about.

Then appeared some of the chief actors in the play. Orderlies scurried through the room. A lieutenant-general, in full uniform, who had come by a dark narrow staircase, strode up and down the apartment. He was running feverish fingers through his hair, and shooting glances right and left to see if he was noticed. I recognized M. de Bourmont.

Another man was expecting him there. He was an individual rather above middle height. His square, heavy figure seemed to indicate a well-to-do peasant. At most he might have been taken—because of his rubicund countenance, his brusque, ungainly ways, his round filibuster's hat and his loud, coarse manner—for a rascally specimen of a naval officer. He made the circuit of the room flashing his eyes at every guest. In him I recognized Lecourbe.

Lecourbe, one of Masséna's most brilliant lieutenants and a friend of Moreau, had tried to raise an agitation in the army during General Moreau's trial in 1804. Adhering faithfully to his friend his name was erased from the army roll, and he went back to live at home until 1814. He took up arms again from motives of patriotism. Given the command of an army on the upper Rhine by

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Napoleon, he defended the entrenched camp of Belfort against the Archduke Ferdinand, and a few months after the archduke's decease died in his own house at Ruffey, a village near Lons le Saulnier.

A curious company was assembled at the supper table. On my right sat a man called Commandant Vivian. His black, close woolly hair, and his fierce, forbidding visage contrasted curiously with the softest voice I ever remember to have heard, and even more strikingly with the most polished and choice conversation an adventurous female traveller was ever privileged to listen to in a provincial inn. He was still in pain from a perilous shot wound in the chest, just above the heart, inflicted upon him at the battle of Lutzen.

The talk became general. Regret was expressed at the excesses whose suppression had become impossible after the marshal's too speedy departure. The café Bourbon, the meeting place of the Royalists, had fallen a prey to the violence of the populace. The officers were strongly opposed to the Bourbon dynasty, but I should not have thought such decided views to be compatible with such moderation and even kindness.

The weather was beautiful and the sky without a cloud. My journey to Lons le Saulnier had benefited me. Ney, I said to myself, will again seem to me what he was in the grandest days of the Empire. I left the town next morning in a postchaise to join Marshal Ney, who had gone on to Auxerre the day before.

The road presented an extraordinary spectacle. Peasants had hastened from their fields; everyone was in their doorways or in the public squares; orderlies were galloping through the villages and perpetually being stopped by the eager inhabitants, to whom they threw manifestoes and cockades; everywhere there was a mixture of surprise, hesitation, and stupor on the part of the authorities, coinciding with curiosity, movement, and delight among the majority of the people.

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When I saw the marshal he had lately had his first interview with the emperor. He had gone to him with frank loyalty. Napoleon, seeing him enter, had come forward to greet him, from the other end of the room where he was standing surrounded by officers, with extreme cordiality. I was not without apprehension as to the fashion in which Ney might receive me the evening I visited him at Auxerre. He showed no embarrassment at my unexpected arrival. At his words all my fears were dispelled.

"Well, Ida," he said, "have events turned out as you wanted?"

"Is the emperor satisfied?"

"He would be rather hard to please if he were not! Not in his palmiest days was he ever acclaimed with such enthusiasm—which I myself felt. Anybody who blames me would have done the same thing in my place, as a Frenchman and a soldier. It was impossible for an old soldier like me not to be carried away. Besides, this outburst of the army, rising as one man, may prove as useful to France as it was irresistible to me. Under the circumstances I spoke and acted as I thought best in obedience to the interests and opinions of my countrymen."

I saw Marshal Ney again in Paris, after the emperor was once more established at the metropolis. As for the latter subject, in connection with which various tales have been told, I will relate what I saw and heard in the Tuileries on the night of March 20th.

The emperor came back by way of Fontainebleau, and entered the Tuileries at nine o'clock in the evening. This nocturnal resumption of the throne has been attributed to Napoleon's suspicion or at least diffidence as to the temper of Paris. Nothing could be more incorrect. Napoleon knew the state of France too well to be afraid of one town after passing through so many provinces.

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He had reason to feel quite safe about the sentiments of his good city of Paris.

The waiting crowd was at last gratified. Napoleon ascended the stairs of the Tuileries escorted by a still greater crowd. Medals, gold lace, and ribbons of exalted orders brushed up indiscriminately against workmen's blouses and soldiers' coats. Persons who but the day before—ardent royalists that they were—had still been mourning the fall of the white standard, proudly donned —as zealous Bonapartists—the glorious three-coloured cockade! But heaven forbid that I should mention names! Some of these gentlemen discovered the art of thrice doing obeisance to the monarchy, which was restored a second time.

Little was touching or sincere in all these protestations and effusions excepting the fidelity of the soldiers. Grenadiers were weeping tears of joy in the presence of their officers, Drouot, Bertrand, and Cambronne, who likewise were deeply moved. Mobbed, surrounded, elbowed, jostled, the emperor smiled each time he stumbled as he went up the staircase of the Tuileries.

I was suddenly tapped lightly on the shoulder and a familiar person beckoned to me. We went aside, and he pulled out a piece of paper, with a list written on it. "Here," he said, "are your instructions," handing me the paper first and then a package of sealed envelopes. These I was to deliver to the officers commanding the chief garrison posts in Paris, at the Clichy, the Popincourt, the Ave Maria, the Nouvelle France, and other barracks. I started immediately in my cabriolet, going from one end of Paris to the other at a fast trot, making stops just long enough to ask for the adjutant and give him his letter. Then I went back to give account of my mission.

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CAULAINCOURT

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CHAPTER XVII

THE NEW CABINET — FOUCHE'S TREACHERY — CARNOT MADE MINISTER OF INTERIOR — HIS NOBLE MOTIVES FOR ACCEPTING THE PORTFOLIO — FOUCHE'S DIVERTING VIEWS AS TO THE FUNCTIONS OF THE POLICE — HIS "MODERATION" — A PRIVATE BREAKFAST WITH NEY IN THE CHAMPS ELYSEES — REGNAULT'S APPREHENSIONS — HOPES OF AN ALLIANCE WITH AUSTRIA — POLITICAL UNREST IN PARIS — PARTICULARS OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION — THE GRAND CEREMONY OF ITS PROMULGATION — COMMENTS AND CRITICISMS — NAPOLEON ONCE MORE GIRDS HIS LOINS FOR WAR — ENTHUSIASM OF THE ARMY — THE CAPITAL'S FORTIFICATIONS ARE STRENGTHENED.

ONCE more settled in the Tuileries, Napoleon selected the following ministry: the Duke de Bassano, who was recreated secretary of state; Decrais, minister of marine; Gaudin, minister of finance; Mollien, public treasurer; Caulaincourt, minister of foreign affairs; Davout, minister of war. Fouché became minister of police and Carnot minister of interior. The last two appointments were especially noted by the public. The presence of two representatives of the old Republican party seemed to indicate that Napoleon, who after 1804 had apparently ignored the origin of that party from its democratic source, was now reverting to it in order to draw fresh political life from it. During the closing years of Napoleon's reign, Fouché had at sundry times concocted

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plots with Talleyrand. His position had never been quite clearly defined. Napoleon had the best of reasons to suspect him and keep him at arm's length. Improbable as it may seem, Fouché's nomination as ministerof police, though his attitude had so frequently given cause for just suspicion during the final years of the Empire, was made in consonance with the request of the emperor's family, particularly of Queen Hortense, whom Fouché constantly deceived by professions of devotion. He made capital of the order of arrest issued against him by the Bourbons after the emperor's banishment to Elba. He boasted loudly of his loyalty, and alleged having conspired towards Napoleon's return.

It was thus that he was made minister of police prior to his great betrayal of his master.

Meanwhile the emperor doubted the Duke of Otranto's integrity. He gave two reliable friends places whose nature would enable them to keep close to Fouché and watch his doings; he made Réal prefect of police and Savary inspector-general of police. The precaution was well advised.

Carnot, the new minister of interior, had had a great name in the Revolution. His courageous pamphlet, of which I have made mention before, renewed his popularity, recalling memories of the glorious days of the Convention. The "organizer of victory," becoming minister of national defence, gave a fine example of democratic principles. In 1814, seeing the sacred soil of his country trodden by the foot of the invader, Carnot stifled the political opposition he had harboured, and offered his services to the emperor. In March, 1815, he accepted the portfolio of the interior "as a man takes a post in the face of the enemy." Without protest he suffered the *Moniteur* —before his nomination to the cabinet—to officially publish his elevation to the rank of count in reward of his clever defence of Antwerp. He explained that he could

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"refuse nothing at this time, for the sake of the example." But he never made application at the record office for his patent of nobility.

Early one morning I was passing through the Rue de Grenelle and stepped into Carnot's. I met him in the courtyard; he was coming out on foot, like a true Lacedemonian. On catching sight of me he greeted me with extreme cordiality, and invited me to his study.

"To what may I owe the pleasure of your visit?" he said. "For you have certainly been neglecting me. Those brilliant military gentlemen have made you forget the old philosopher. Can I be of any use to you?"

I hastened to say that I had not come as a petitioner, but as a friend. I told him I had faithfully executed the commission he had intrusted to me at the date of my departure for the South, and that since then I had constantly been in motion.

"There is somebody who has been moving more than you, and that somebody was being watched by the whole of Europe."

I congratulated Carnot upon his patriotic conduct. He answered that if he had accepted a ministerial portfolio, he had done so in the hope of being able to benefit his country, adding that he had felt humiliated by the count's title, in which he had been obliged to acquiesce though it concorded so ill with his well-known views.

"But," he went on, "our country wants the help of all her children. This is not the hour to stand upon one's hobbies. My compliance was an exchange for the confidence with which I was honoured by the only man who can save us, the great captain who must keep the enemy from our borders. I have allowed myself to be made a count, so as to be able with the aid of time, victory, advance of public opinion and that of the head of the state, to arrive at the happy result of unmaking all counts, past and present."

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A few days after my visit to Carnot, the husband of one of my friends was arrested for having in his possession certain compromising political documents sent from Ghent. Distressed by the intense grief of his wife, I promised to go the next day to the minister of police, to beg his release.

Upon arriving at the Duke of Otranto's, not having asked for an audience, I sent in my card. The minister replied that he would see me in half an hour. A stream of messengers passed in and out. I was finally admitted. Fouché came towards me with marked civility.

"I, Madam, who know everything, was not aware of your being in Paris. My department is remiss."

"Not at all, my Lord. If your agents have in their reports overlooked my presence in town—which is really of no importance—they sometimes err from exaggerated zeal in other cases. The request I come to put before your Excellency to-day is a proof of it."

I then disclosed the object of my visit. He listened obligingly.

"My system," he said, "is not intended to render hateful the power whose purpose is to moderate excess. At every change of government there is reacted upon the police the position of its agents, whose membership is generally the same, and who then feel obliged to confirm anew their reputation for capacity and fidelity. Therefore, to run no risk of losing their places, these good people take a plunge into furious activity. After that everything runs smoothly. So we must forgive them."

I profited by the duke's smile to try to soften his heart for my poor friend.

"Yes," he observed, "that is like you women; you shed tears over a sick butterfly! What if a man is arrested? It is such a simple matter! Usually his arrest is a paternal act, which, carried out soon enough, prevents a fool from going further in some piece of idiocy that

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may be his ruin. According to what you tell me, your friend must be a fool. He shall be let go and told to keep quiet in the future, and the trouble will be all over. You too will give him this advice after he has been set at liberty. I promise to sign the warrant within a few hours. In every political party there are a number of rattle-brains who ought not to be persecuted,—persecution never does any good,—but who must be looked after and muzzled like your acquaintance. Now, the military, for instance, your particular friends—might they not shout 'Long live the emperor!' with more moderation?"

"But it seems to me, your Grace, that one can scarcely shout loud enough!"

"I am delighted to see you have such enthusiastic sentiments. But is it really 'Long live the emperor!' that you exclaim? Is there not some other thought beneath it?"

"I do not understand."

"The police, Madam, is a universal confessional. Let me inform you that military sins are disclosed here as well as others."

The taciturn minister had waxed talkative—perhaps in the hope of making me so too. But I was cautious enough to keep my counsel. During this brief interview I however gained the painful conviction that there was a great deal of moderation in Fouché's devotion to Napoleon.

Escorting me to the door he said:

"Recommend your friends, whoever they may be, to be moderate and to behave themselves."

Two or three hours later the orders of the Duke of Otranto had been carried into effect. The minister of police had released "one of the fools who ought not to be persecuted, but looked after and muzzled."

Immediately upon the arrival of Marshal Ney at Paris, whither he had been summoned to organize the young

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guard, I received a note from him, requesting me to meet him at an eating house in the Champs Elysées. Delighted at this token of friendliness, I went to the appointed place, being first to get there. I was dressed in female apparel, simply but stylishly. There was a great concourse of military men in the Champs Elysées. Their martial countenances shone with happiness and hope, as in our brightest days of triumph. All were talking in exultant terms about Napoleon.

Suddenly I perceived Ney in plain clothes beckoning me to come to him. I made haste to do so. I reached him all out of breath, and was surprised to see Ney send away his cabriolet and go into a shabby little tavern. The marshal was encased in a long coat, his face concealed beneath a broadbrimmed hat. I, on the other hand, in my modish attire, felt some hesitation in entering such a place, and put on the airs of Mme. Cottin's heroines when they first venture into a mysterious castle. Ney climbed to a sort of wooden balcony, whence he cast down upon me a look of discontent. Recognizing my silliness, I crossed the threshhold, and debonairely scaled the steps until I reached the balcony. I put aside my cape, and we began to chat. I asked him what the next move was to be. He replied that the emperor was the same as ever, for which he was very sorry.

The weather was rainy, but quite mild. The queer place where we exchanged our confidences cannot easily be imagined. It was a bare, hideous room full of tables covered with linen of most uninviting appearance. We nevertheless ate with a splendid appetite. We were served with an omelet and a giblet stew, washing them down with some good Suresnes wine. We jovially reminded each other that we had often fared worse during the retreat from Russia.

Ney had engaged all the tables on the first floor, so that we ran no risk of being interrupted.

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"Ida," he said, "we are going to fight again. Are you still inclined for the finest trade in the world?"

"Oh, certainly, always with you, Marshal!"

Some disturbance became audible downstairs. I went out upon the balcony where I could hear soldiers and men of the people talking and drinking, and singing military and patriotic songs. The company whose involuntary listeners we were was a curious popular study. The soldiers, who played the principal part, in spite of their Bacchic and sentimental digressions were always resuming their celebrations of warlike topics. The emperor's name was more frequently invoked than the tender passion.

"Well," I heard one of the warriors say, "we have the little man at last, and in a few days the mother and the child will be with him at the Tuileries."

For some time—which we however did not allow to hang heavily on our hands—we were thus blockaded in our balcony, until eventually the soldiers dispersed at hearing drums beating the retreat. Before we separated Ney warned me that he could not see me again for several days. We parted near the Arc de Triomphe.

The next day was the review of a body of troops that had been under the command of the Duke de Berry, and which I witnessed. It was a fine moment when Cambronne and the grenadiers from Elba marched past with the eagles. After the review the emperor had these brave fellows drawn up in a square, and gave them one of his vibrant, inspiriting discourses.

On my way home I met a crowd of brothers-in-arms. There was no way of avoiding a military feast. The plans and policy of the emperor were tumultuously debated. There were four pretty women present, each of us adorned with a nosegay of violets. At every glass of champagne the ladies plucked out a few flowers which they placed in the gentlemen's buttonholes, with shouts of "Long live the emperor!"

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In those days I often saw Regnault. He seemed anxious although charmed at the emperor's return. But he gave himself up to no illusions. He was aware that the new order of things hung for their stability upon the turn of political negotiations—upon the alliance with Austria and the return of Marie-Louise and the King of Rome.

A very singular thing was the optimism of the people in high places, in all parties. Confirmed royalists asserted that the king had not left Lille, and that the entire provinces, with the exception of Paris, had hoisted the white banner of the Bourbons. On the other side, friends of mine in closest touch with the emperor's government were already reckoning upon Austria's aid to Napoleon. Many felt convinced that even before taking up arms in our favour the "Viennese father-in-law" would send back to his imperial son-in-law his wife, Marie-Louise, and his son, the King of Rome, and in spite of his scepticism since the Revolution, Regnault de Saint-Jean-d' Angély himself was not far from sharing the belief of the people as regarded this assistance.

Regnault spoke to me of a design he had to secure a place for me in Queen Hortense's household. Events left him no time to carry out his intention.

The need of activity and movement which incessantly burned within me, gave me some slight political value during the Hundred Days. I seemed already to note a certain shifting of public opinion. All attempts at resistance on the part of the Bourbons had failed. Nevertheless there was an undercurrent of mute opposition. Politics were being discussed everywhere, and—what had never been known to happen before—people were not afraid to analyze the emperor's aims. Often, in the houses where I expected to find the most faithful adherence to him, remarks like this would be passed:

"It is true that when he landed Napoleon made a proclamation of our rights, but now, as you see, we still have no Constitution."

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MADAME DE STAEL
(*From an Oil Painting in a Private Collection*)

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The new charter was being criticised, although it had not yet been published. Everyone was complaining and nobody knew exactly what they wanted. Only the soldiers continued to show unswerving loyalty to Napoleon. And the emperor had every reason to trust fully to his army, which was attached to him with a fanatical devotion.

At the end of April, 1815, occurred the publication in the *Moniteur* of the new, impatiently awaited Constitution, officially styled "An Additional Act to the Constitution of the Empire." It was popularly known as the "Benjamin," from the name of its chief author, a man bitterly hostile to the imperial government after the Consulate, the Swiss writer—a former friend of Mme. de Stael—M. Benjamin Constant, who had consented to devise a liberal constitution for his enemy, hoping to append his own name to it. This Constitution was submitted to the votes of the French electors, who were to enter their suffrages in registers opened in all the communes. The result was to be declared at an assembly convoked at Paris for the 26th day of May, 1815. By the "Additional Act" legislative authority was divided between the sovereign and two chambers, one of hereditary peers and the other of representatives chosen by the people. The liberty of the press was guaranteed; the Bourbon family was forever denied the throne, all measures intended to reintroduce feudal taxes or prerogatives, or to establish a state religion in France, were expressly forbidden. Provosts' courts were abolished. The debates in the upper chamber were to be public; the declaration of a state of siege was to be the privilege of the chambers; ministerial responsibility was increased, and so on.

Of fifteen hundred and thirty thousand votes only about five thousand were cast in the negative. So the nation accepted the "Benjamin" eagerly enough.

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The day after this was known I repaired early in the morning to the Champ de Mars to attend the ceremony of promulgating the "Additional Act to the Constitution of the Empire."

From the first moment I felt profoundly cast down. I discovered that secret hostility against the emperor was rife. I overheard a conversation between two officers who were in civilian dress. Their boldness of speech was no less than cynical. Said one of them:

"What does he want with his burlesque on the reign of Charlemagne? After sending our rights through the crucible of the 'Additional Act,' does he suppose we are to be consoled with his imperial nonsense?"

The emperor and his brothers appeared in all the splendour of variegated silks and velvets. At the sight of these garments of a bygone age, the crowd, instead of manifesting the enthusiasm due to a great captain mounting his steed to save his country, seemed to be moved by no emotion stronger than curiosity for a richly dressed actor. That was the tenor of the remarks passed all about me. They were cruel and malignant, and saddened me grievously, the more so as there was no reply to make.

The religious service which preceded the taking of the oath was imposing through its grand simplicity. Standing at the foot of an immense altar, Napoleon dominated the scene through the dignity of his demeanour. He there appeared to me like one of the heroes of antiquity offering up a propitiatory sacrifice to the gods before battle.

The emperor spoke, and his voice reached me. He subscribed, by an oath on the Bible, to the laws of the Empire. In his turn he received the oath of allegiance of the people through the electors; that of the army through the minister of war; that of the national guard through the minister of the interior.

The silence that ensued was broken by a tremendous

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shout of "Long live the emperor!" which spread through the vast gathering on the Champ de Mars. Then the troops marched past. The crowd never wearied of admiring those brave fellows, those bronzed veterans of the guard, who in their breasts bore wounds covered with honourable medals.

I was almost dead with fatigue when I got home. I had been on my feet all day, like a veteran last to leave the field of battle.

The day after the ceremony a number of persons were arguing about it at the Count Regnault's. Some disparaged the costume worn by the emperor and his brothers. Asked for my opinion, I answered that I would rather have seen the emperor in his gray coat and his little cocked hat, than in the plumed cap and the silk and gold mantle.

I saw Ney on the day of his nomination to the House of Peers. I told him what I had heard.

"Let them jabber," he said. "They will yield to the iron hand of necessity. They will do some brave talking and then they will meekly give way."

He told me too that he believed the emperor was being betrayed even by members of the government. Fouché, whom Napoleon had for a moment thought of imprisoning instead of making him minister of police, Fouché was playing him false, maintaining secret intelligence with the royalists, Metternich, and Talleyrand. Murat, upon the advice of Caroline, tried to weather the storm alone. But the united powers had not been slow to give their reply to his manifesto, and in the beginning of May the rout at Tolentino was enough to foreshadow his loss of the throne. A month later he made his escape from Naples in a fishing boat.

An individual well versed in the political situation mentioned to me the letter Napoleon had addressed to the powers. Quoth my informant:

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"Napoleon is in danger. That letter will do no good. The emperor is wrong to make overtures to the Viennese court. He can effect nothing except by winning a battle."

For this consummation the emperor was preparing with all the resource and might of his genius. He electrified the national guard by merely passing through the ranks. A banquet of fifteen thousand covers given on the Champ de Mars to the imperial guard was a gorgeous festivity. His six armies were christened the army of the North, the Jura, the Moselle, the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees. Batteries of artillery were formed; three hundred cannon were mounted on the commanding spots of Paris; bodies of irregulars and volunteers were organized. There was a rumour of the people of the northern and eastern districts of France rising in a mass; roads and defiles bristled with trenches. It made me rejoice to see all these preparations for defence and signs of national activity succeeding one another and giving hope of victory. The regiments again took the glorious names they had won in the battles of the Republic and the Empire, names such as the "Invincible," "the Terrible," "One Against Ten." These regiments had the memories of a score of brilliant campaigns to inspire them. The old guard was strengthened by six thousand picked men.

"Let Napoleon proclaim France a republic," said a friend of the unfortunate Quesnel to me. "With that magic word and the quickening of all souls, Montmartre itself would become a Jemmapes or a Valmy. There is in our people a national fanaticism, a hatred of foreigners, that would make a hero out of every armed Frenchman."

In the midst of these great happenings the Republicans were by no means idle. There was even a touch of Jacobinism in the general ferment. The review of the Federals took place in the Place du Carrousel. It made a miserable impression on me. This collection of ragamuffins, among whom the coalheavers were the cleanest,

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came full of enthusiasm. But it was a brawling enthusiasm which resembled a menace to the safety of the Empire rather than an earnest of its defence. There was a melancholy contrast between these unruly gangs and the splendidly disciplined soldiers. I walked about in the crowd, and three times I was near enough to the emperor to have touched him. His features wore a constrained and preoccupied look which was sad to see. I went away in disgust.

A few people I met in the evening shared my sentiments. A counsellor of state told how Napoleon had clasped the hilt of his sword at the reading of the programme of the Breton Federation. Everyone exclaimed:

"If we only win the first battle! Without a military success nothing will avail against the frenzy of our own people." Ney was in a rage with everybody; he was in turn furious with the ministers, the people, and the emperor himself, because of this review.

Meanwhile the popular ecstasy which Napoleon's return had provoked was unabated, since fresh sections of the army marched through Paris every day. The emperor realized that the sight of his gray cloak was not without influence upon the minds of his soldiers, whose fervency was of great moment in its effect upon public opinion at the capital. I did not care to believe in Regnault's political apprehensions, who feared the hostile spirit of the Republicans against Napoleon. Regnault held that there were turncoats belonging to the Convention as well as to the old nobility. He was right, as soon became apparent.

Paris now resembled a camp of war. The emperor often went in the morning to inspect the fortifications at Montmartre, and rarely with any escort but Generals Bertrand and Montholon. Anyone could have approached him without the least difficulty. Amid the existing hatred of him and the general unrest, the emperor showed

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extraordinary courage in thus exposing himself to any dagger that might so easily have been levelled at him. One day I saw him going out on horseback, accompanied by three or four officers. He was riding through the suburb of Saint-Denis one morning, in the familiar coat and hat, tranquil and observant. I saw him proceeding at a walk, and I followed from afar. I too went on horseback, in male garb. No one made any demonstrations. People opening their shops took their hats off to the emperor as he passed, and then spoke of him hopefully as though interested rather in the man than in his government.

Leaving the city by the Saint-Denis gate, the emperor mounted the heights and examined the fortifications. He talked at some length with the officers commanding the works. I thought to observe that he was dissatisfied with what he saw. Although it was still early in the day there were a number of workmen assembled. Napoleon remained a considerable time, conversing with two generals and now and then stopping to give a group of workmen a good word. And then shouts of "Long live the emperor!" went up. When I reached home again it wanted but a little of noon.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST CAMPAIGN — IDA FOLLOWS NEY TO WATERLOO — HIS HEROISM IN THE BATTLE — CALMNESS OF NAPOLEON — THE RETREAT — CAMILLA, ANOTHER MILITARY WOMAN — IS WOUNDED AND TAKEN CARE OF BY THE AUTHORESS — THE RETURN TO PARIS — CARNOT'S IRRATIONAL HOPEFULNESS — HE RESISTS NAPOLEON'S DETHRONEMENT SINGLE-HANDED — THE CONTEMPORARY'S LAST INTERVIEW WITH NEY — CAMILLA'S RECOVERY AND DISAPPEARANCE.

NAPOLEON'S departure was close at hand, for the campaign was impending. All the generals had joined their troops on the Belgian frontier, and I had many farewells to make. A whole day had not sufficed for them.

I left Paris on the night of June the 12th, on the morning of which Ney had joined the army. Had he been aware that I was following the soldiers again, he would have ordered me back to the capital at once. So I took care to keep out of his sight. I arrived at Charleroi two hours after the marshal had left. I did not see him until he was at Ligny, a little before the battle at that place. The details are familiar of the splendid fighting to which the march upon Quatre Bras was the sequel. Half by accident and half through fascination I at last found myself face to face with Ney. As usual he became angry, and commanded me to return to Paris, or at least to go back as far as Charleroi. Of course I did nothing of the sort.

During this brief war our soldiers maintained their

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customary good spirits and bravery. I lived among them, so to speak, in the intimacy of the battlefield. The very night preceding the fatal 18th of June the men were as merry as they had been in the heyday of our fortunes. The evening before Waterloo I told the marshal of the jokes the soldiers made about keeping their arms sheltered from the teeming rain. The weather was in truth abominable.

"I hope," Ney had said to me twenty-four hours before, "that we shall finish off these gentlemen from England."

He was then bubbling with hope, but by the next time I saw him he had become anxious. He ordered me positively to go back, while there was yet time. I pretended to obey. Meanwhile I arranged to be within easy reach of the rear of the line. What a pen it would require to do justice to the scenes that happened a few hours later!

Waterloo was perhaps the Prince de la Moskwa's most brilliant battle. He was entrusted with the central attack, upon the village and farmhouse of la Haie Sainte. Supported by eighty pieces of artillery, he made the onslaught with all his magnificent heroism, and took the position after a terrible struggle. He held it all day. The battle would soon have been won had the English not received succour. Alas! while Napoleon, impatiently awaiting Grouchy, thought to perceive advancing upon the field the columns that were to assure his victory, Bulow's thirty thousand Prussians, attracted by the cannonading, were marching against our right and our rear, and were soon followed by thirty thousand more Prussians, under old Blucher, who established communication between Bulow and the English. From thenceforward the defeat of the French army was but a question of time. Ney attempted to create a reaction, and to compel victory to remain with our standards. He dismounted from his horse, and took his sword in hand. Seconded

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CAMBRONNE AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO
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by Friant and Cambronne he repulsed the enemy opposing him, and braved the terrific fire of a long line of infantry. Soon the enemy's attack grew more formidable. Our men had exhausted their ammunition. Then the fateful cry rang out of "Run for your lives!" It came from some wretched traitors, and was being repeated by fleeing soldiers. The formations loosened, and became disordered, general confusion followed, and the rout began. None but the eight battalions of the guard stood fast in the centre. The big-hearted Cambronne, with his indomitable courage, exhorted them to resist. Ney was by his side. The marshal had had five horses killed under him in the affray. His sword was broken. In every square might be heard shouted the command after each of the enemy's volleys: "Close up the ranks!" But the splendid squares of the old guard fell crushed by the weight of numbers while defending themselves to the last breath.

I witnessed the battle of Waterloo on horseback from behind our lines.

I cannot say with what emotion my eyes followed those dreadful scenes of carnage and the successive gallant charges of our cavalry. At the end of the day when the Prussians were taking part in the action, and the battle was lost, Ney, his clothes riddled with shot, his face streaming blood, threw himself into the middle of a square composed of heroes of the old guard, surrounded by corpses, exclaiming:

"France is lost! We must die here!"

The Bravest of the Brave, unwilling to survive the disaster, never desisted from confronting the enemy's fire, hoping that it would kill him. His uniform was in shreds. He was covered with contusions; he had been knocked down several times; his horses that had been shot had rolled over him. At last he could no longer stand on his legs, and was about to succumb when a corporal and two

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or three grenadiers seized him and carried him away with the remains of their column.

Night had come, I was in the midst of the army, which was now in full retreat. Let my readers imagine a woman astray on the field of battle, utterly worn out by bodily fatigue and under stress of the greatest anguish of soul—and then let them be surprised because in the account of that awful catastrophe I have not recorded everything exactly as it occurred. My head goes round at the bare thought of those fearful moments: I am on horseback—I am borne away in the flood of fugitives, and am lost in the throng—I yield to the torrent—I no longer see it, since it hems me in on every side!

Those who say that Napoleon was a coward, and that he fled from the field after watching the battle from a safe spot, never saw him in war. During the fight at Mont Saint-Jean I watched the emperor's face through a telescope shortly before the rout began. He was giving an order for the grenadiers to make a final attempt to cross a ravine choked with the bodies of French soldiers. His countenance was absolutely impassive. About him were falling his bravest and best. He never frowned. He seemed to be measuring the abyss of horror with his eagle eye, and to be searching for an issue from it. He was then expecting Grouchy's army. When the Prussians appeared instead, and were upon our already decimated ranks, his officers surrounded him and took him away. The soldiers vented their rage in exclaiming against some unfortunate generals.

The rain was streaming down; the roads were sodden and almost impracticable. We stumbled over corpses and dying men. I was carried along with a retreating column, being obliged to move with the current or be trampled down. The sight of the dead was no less terrible than the shrieks of the wounded left to perish by the wayside. In the darkness I accosted a man who seemed

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scarcely able to drag himself along, and who I thought must be wounded. But it proved to be a woman in disguise. I cannot say what my feelings were when I recognized my friend Camilla, the gentle mistress of the brave young General Duhesme, who had been killed after the action. She had followed him wherever he went. She had sacrificed rank and wealth for his sake, and had seen him slain under her own eyes. Camilla was so faint that at first she did not know me. I made her drink from my flask, and upon reviving she burst into tears. The unhappy girl had become involved in a skirmish. Her right hand was cut, and her right shoulder slightly injured by a sabre thrust. She said to me:

"The Prussians are murderers, not soldiers; they slaughter people, setting upon them ten to one."

The night had become very dark. It was lighted up at moments by irregular flashes. I caught sight of some marauding peasants, one of whom came up to us. I offered him money to furnish us with a guide. Himself showed us to the main road. Here he secured a conveyance for us in which we rode to Paris in four days. Camilla travelled prone on the seat. By the time we had reached the metropolis she was in a fever. I took her to my apartment, and put her into my bed, while I made shift on the floor with a mattress. Camilla finally became delirious. I had a doctor summoned, and then hired a nurse to take care of her.

Meanwhile I underwent severe apprehensions as to the fate of Ney. I heard at length that he was safe and sound. Knowing, however, that I should pain him deeply by letting the wife he cherished and respected know of my interest in him through some rash act, I refrained from making any endeavour to see him.

My old friend, Regnault-de-Saint Jean d'Angély was in despair. All was lost, he lamented. The Faubourg Saint-Germain was clamouring for the Bourbons. The

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House of Representatives was busy with a constitution instead of with levying fighters.

"It is men we want," said Regnault, "and they are only concocting laws!"

Carnot surprised me by the view he took of Waterloo. He by no means deplored the dreadful disaster and the dire consequences which threatened, but opined that it would probably be a good thing for France. Instead of owing their welfare to an army and a general, he thought that his countrymen, rising up in arms, would work out their own salvation. After driving away their enemies, they would not need to fear that victory meant fresh servitude for them. I tried to draw Carnot out of his delusion. His extraordinary hopefulness was quite beyond belief. He thought he could raise a million soldiers; that the mobilization of all the national guards would replace a professional army of experienced men; that it would be enough to proclaim the country in danger, as in 1793; that Paris would prepare for a siege; that she would be defended; that in the last resort we might retreat beyond the Loire; that we could fortify ourselves there; that by calling upon the troops in the Vendée and the Midi we could hold out until, having recuperated and gathered fresh energy, we could fall upon our enemies with a reorganized army and drive them out of the country.

Such blindness made me sad. Nevertheless I did not contradict a man for whose character I felt such profound admiration and esteem.

A few days after he had imparted his views to me, at the cabinet meeting which pronounced upon Napoleon's abdication Carnot was the only minister who vigorously opposed it, asserting that such abdication would mean the ruin of the country. He was determined to resist to the very last. When he perceived that he was alone in his opinion, and that the abdication was certain, he leaned on the table with his face in his hands, and broke into

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sobs. It was then that Napoleon, with deep emotion in his voice, addressed the famous words to his minister of the interior:

"Carnot, I ought to have known you sooner!"

About the end of June I got word from Ney. I forthwith repaired to the Rue Richelieu, the meeting that was to be our last. Ney was standing at a window, looking extremely gloomy. I hastened upstairs and found myself alone with him in a room containing a portrait of the emperor in full size. We talked together for an hour. Ney spoke of Waterloo. "The victory was in our hands!" he exclaimed. "Napoleon's generalship was perfect. Our soldiers never fought with more ardour. And to think of being beaten with such men!"

All the consolation that a loving heart could devise I freely offered him. I asked him no questions. I told him of my encounter with Camilla in a few words.

"Poor creature!" he exclaimed pityingly. "She was in Spain during the war there, and underwent the greatest hardships so as to be near her lover. Foy knows her; he urged her to go home until peace was declared. Her answer was a threat to blow out her brains before the whole regiment."

"She would have done it," I replied, "she gave up everything for him, and her only object in life was to love him."

Ney wanted to press some bank notes upon me for Camilla's supposed wants. A generous subterfuge! I refused the money, making myself out much richer than I was. My real reason for declining was that I felt Michael Ney would very soon need all his resources.

As for Camilla, the fever had left her, and she was rapidly convalescing. Soon after my interview with Ney, I went out early one morning to find, upon my return home, that Camilla had gone. She had addressed a letter to me, in which she confessed that the doctor who had

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attended her had informed her she was to become a mother. Foreseeing all the embarrassment and expense which would be imposed upon me, she had decided to quit my house forever, so that I might be free of her. She asked me to forgive her, vowing that I might count upon her eternal gratitude. My distress cannot be imagined. It was as if I had lost a dear sister. I vainly made inquiries at all the hospitals; my search was fruitless. I learnt nothing whatever that rendered the slightest clue as to her whereabouts. But in 1819 I met Camilla in Belgium, happily married to a good man in government employ and the mother of three children. The token of her passion for General Duhesme, that she bore in her womb when she left me, had not survived.

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Auteur des Mémoires d'une Contemporaine
J'ai assisté aux victoires de la république, j'ai traversé les tribunaux du
Directoire, j'ai vu la gloire du consulat et la grandeur de l'empire sans avoir
assisté une seule fois aux sentiments que ne sont pas de mon âge, j'ai été à vingt-trois
ans à Waterloo.

THE "CONTEMPORARY" IN 1820

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CHAPTER XIX

BANISHMENT OF CARNOT — NEY'S INTENDED DEPARTURE TO THE UNITED STATES — HE IS ARRESTED AT BESSONIS — HIS CHIVALROUS REFUSAL TO ATTEMPT ESCAPE — A PLOT TO RESCUE HIM — THE COURT-MARTIAL DECLARES ITSELF AN INCOMPETENT TRIBUNAL — NEY IS TRIED BEFORE THE HOUSE OF PEERS — CONDEMNED — AND SHOT — IDA SEES HIM GOING TO HIS EXECUTION — HER VOW OF AMENDMENT AT HIS BIER — CONCLUSION.

On the 24th of July, 1815, there appeared in the *Monteur* a list of some twenty military officers who were to be arrested and tried by court martial, for treason to King Louis XVIII. in connection with the Hundred Days. Among them were Ney, Labédoyère, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, Grouchy, Bertrand, Drouot, Savary, Cambronne. Another, much longer list, of persons expelled from France for having "seized control of the government by force," included the names of Carnot and Regnault de Saint-Jean d' Angély. The fact must not be overlooked that in this second list, drawn up by Fouché, were mentioned some of the Duke d' Otranto's own friends, and even some of his colleagues in the ministry of the Hundred Days—Carnot, for instance, the minister of interior.

In his indignation Carnot wrote the following short note to Fouché, which was seen by Marshal Saint-Cyr, minister of war at the time:

"Where am I to go, traitor?"

Fouché, with his usual cynicism, answered on the same piece of paper:

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"Wherever you please, idiot."

Ney had intended to leave France altogether, utterly disheartened as he was by the turn of events after Waterloo. He proposed to go to the United States, there to live with an uncle of Mme. Ney. This was M. Genet, a Girondist who had once been a member of the National Convention, but was now an American citizen. He was a brother of Mme. Auguié (Mme. Ney's mother), and had married the daughter of Judge Clinton at New York. M. Genet was fond of the marshal, with whom he had long been in correspondence, and whom he had invited to Albany, his place of residence.

Marshal Ney remained at the mineral springs of Saint-Alban until July 25th, and during his sojourn at that place made arrangements with a banker, M. Pontalba, to open a credit for him in the United States. His wife, not understanding the full import of the government's decree, was no doubt influenced by her affection for her children's father so far as to persuade him to defer the journey. After the publication of the notice in the *Moniteur* Ney entirely renounced the idea of the voyage, deeming it beneath his dignity to leave France. Yielding to the instances of his friends, he however consented to ask the Michel brothers, who had made their fortunes as army contractors, to give him shelter at their ironworks, secluded in the dense forest of Azay. The police would never have looked for the marshal there. But the brothers Michel, forgetful of all their erstwhile promises of devotion, refused hospitality to the outcast. Ney then went to the Château de Bessonis. He gave himself up to the men who were seeking him, but who did not know him.

I had renewed my acquaintance in Paris with M. Belloc, who had formerly served under the marshal. From him I learnt all the news that had any reference to the illustrious outlaw. Sometimes I would become filled with

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hope, and again I would be plunged into despair and terror. I was one of the first to hear of Ney's arrest at Bessonis, through a letter from Captain Jaumard, the police officer charged with the painful mission of bringing the marshal back to Paris. Someone was warning this officer that in the neighbourhood of Bessonis were posted individuals who perhaps designed to abduct the marshal. Ney was himself in the room where this secret communication was made. He overheard enough to apprize him of the subject of the conversation. He stepped forward, remarking to the officer:

"Captain, I will do no more than remind you that I have given you my word of honour to go to Paris with you. If an attempt is made to carry me off against your will, then I shall ask you for weapons to help you in frustrating such a plan, in order that my sacred promise to you may be fulfilled to the letter."

Four miles from Paris Mme. Ney was waiting for her husband at an inn, the newspapers having acquainted her with his apprehension and forthcoming arrival. The police officers allowed the couple to converse in private. When they had done, the marshal told one of the officers that he was ready to go on in the carriage. Ney had tears in his eyes, and noticed that the officer too was moved. He accordingly said:

"You may be surprised to see me weep. It is not on my own account that I am sorry, but because of my children."

The marshal was first confined in the Abbaye prison and then at the Conciergerie. It came to my ears that a plot was brewing in Paris to bring about Ney's escape, should he be condemned to death. I was heart and soul with the scheme to rescue the bravest soldier of the French army and the idol of my admiration, and did my utmost to further it. Gamot, Ney's brother-in-law, with whom I became acquainted through Belloc, was one of us.

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But Gamot had slight hopes. He was afraid of the consequences of Ney's bluntness, and of the pride he was sure to exhibit under cross-examination.

The marshal's counsel were for raising the objection that the court martial was not competent to try him. He was a member of the House of Peers, and therefore only amenable to trial before that body. As soon as I knew of whom the court was to be composed, I ceased to recognize any advantage in denying its competency. The members were all brothers-in-arms of Ney: Marshals Jourdan (president), Masséna, Augereau, and Mortier, and Lieutenant-Generals Gazan, Claparède, and Villatte.

The prisoner appeared before his judges on the 9th of November in a plain uniform, with shoulder-pieces denoting his military grade and one order—that of the Legion of Honour. The president of the tribunal began asking him usual questions as to name, age, birthplace, domicile, and occupation. Ney answered them, stating that he did so from deference to the marshals, but adding that he claimed the court to be incompetent. M. Berryer made a long and eloquent speech in proof of Ney's contention. The result was this: After retiring for a quarter of an hour, the judges returned to the room, and their spokesman, Marshal Jourdan, announced that by a vote of five to two the court declared it was not competent to try Marshal Ney.

Marshal Moncey, Duke de Conegliano, upon being summoned to sit on this court martial, had refused in a letter to the king that breathed a noble spirit of patriotism and magnanimity. I quote a portion of the letter:

"Since I am placed between the cruel alternatives of disobeying Your Majesty and of violating my conscience, I find it necessary to explain myself. My life, my fortune, and everything precious of mine is at the disposal of my country and my king. But my honour belongs to myself; no human power can rob me of it. And yet I am asked

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MARSHAL MONCEY, DUKE DE CONEGLIANO
(*From Walbonne's Painting*)

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to pass judgment on Marshal Ney! Allow me to inquire of your Majesty what his accusers were doing while he was fighting all our battles? Can France forget the hero of the Beresina?"

Moncey paid dearly for this letter. A royal decree stripped him of his marshal's rank and of his duke's title, and he was confined for three months to the fortress of Ham.

On the 23rd of November Ney was brought before the House of Peers. The particulars of the trial and its fearful issue are well known. In the course of their arguments Ney's counsel adduced in his defence the fact of Sarrelouis—the marshal's home—having become foreign territory, which, they said, made him an alien.

"No, gentlemen!" the marshal impetuously broke in, "I have lived and fought as a Frenchman! As a Frenchman I will die!"

Being unable to witness the trial, I made arrangements to be informed of every step in its progress. There were several meeting places agreed upon among the prisoner's friends. All my energies were bent towards the completion of the plan by which he might be rescued if condemned to death. Thirty resolute men had promised to act, and fifty more were ready to help them.

While the trial went on, my efforts continued, and I must avow that I met with many weak souls. I will mention no names. On the other hand, one of those who received me most favourably was Marshal Davout. A man of stern principles and brusque military manners, this rival for fame of an illustrious warrior showed deep and sincere sympathy for his brother-in-arms. Unbiassed by the prejudices of the day, he took a humane, sensible view of this singular case, and properly valued the extenuating circumstances. Davout reassured me, and gave me fresh confidence by his calm reasoning and logical arguments. But, alas! only for a moment.

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As the deciding day drew near, I felt as if I wanted the verdict to be put off forever. I counted the hours—those hours of mortal anxiety—with trembling. I was afraid to look forward. The 6th and 7th of December I spent in varying throes of hope and fear. On the 6th my friend Belloc came to see me, and, as he went away, gave instructions in a low tone to my servants. He retraced his steps three or four times, and finally came back and sat with me without uttering a word. I understood. It was all over. Ney had been condemned. I burst into tears, and wept through part of the night.

On the 7th of December, at six in the morning, someone knocked lightly on my door. It was Belloc. He came to me, took my hand, and said, with feeling such as he had never shown before:

"My friend—sentence has been passed—he must pay his debt. It is impossible to save him. If you wish to see him once more, get ready now."

A cab was waiting below. Belloc, who was very pale, made me get in, and then whispered to the man on the box. We drove off. I was blind and speechless. But on the Louis XV. bridge a current of fresh air striking my face revived my spirits. I thought of the marshal's daring friends, and repeated to myself, "They will carry him off; he will not die." I thought we should go to the Grenelle plain, but the cab drove into the Rue du Bac.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"Leave it to me, my poor friend," was the reply.

After the Rue du Bac we followed the Boulevard Montparnasse, and then reached some open lots. We drove along the Luxembourg gardens, at the end of which we found a line of troops stretching from the railing to the Observatoire square. I afterwards learnt that the police had been warned the day before of an attempt to be made to set the marshal free. It was true that a body of our friends were to have assembled, all armed, at

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Grenelle, where military executions usually took place, and where Labédoyère had just been shot. But the government had selected another spot near the Luxembourg: the Observatoire square, opposite a wall that still exists, to which I have often made reverent pilgrimages, like many other French people. Belloc had been advised of the new order too late. Ney was not to be saved.

It was a gloomy winter's morning. The sky was black and low, the weather chill and foggy. A fine, piercing, gelid rain was falling with merciless persistence, changing the earth to mud, and soaking to the bone the national guardsmen who formed the line. It was a mournful picture. Soon a dim procession came marching out of the fog. In the lead were grenadiers. The funeral escort drew nearer, like a sacred host surrounding the carriage which bore the marshal. My heart beat to bursting. I begged Belloc to let me alight.

"In a moment," he replied.

When the carriage arrived close to the spot where we were stationed, it stopped. Belloc seized my hand; suddenly I was standing on the ground. Everything that then happened I saw as if under a flash of lightning. Ney got out of the carriage. He was wearing civilian clothes: a long dark coat, a white necktie, black breeches and stockings, a tall beaver hat with curved brim. He uncovered. His slightly raised head showed that his face wore a tranquil expression. He looked first to the right and then to the left. He caught sight of me. Then, as though fearing to compromise his faithful friends by the least sign of recognition, he bent his brow downward a trifle. He walked on with firm step. At that instant I discerned through the mist, in the centre of the square of troops, and standing out from the dark background of the wall, the firing squad. I tried to rush forward. Belloc pulled me back, and forced me into the cab. Then I dropped weakly upon the seat. A few minutes elapsed,

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each a whole century long. Then I heard a sharp report. I went into a dead faint.

When I came to I found myself lying on a narrow iron bedstead, in a room with whitewashed walls. A sister of mercy was by my side. I was being cared for at the Maternity hospital, whither Belloc had taken me in my unconscious condition. I was still in a very feeble state.

After a space the silence of the hospital was disturbed by a strange commotion. The good sister went out, and returned almost at once, deeply moved. The marshal's body had been brought in to be left in the hospital until burial.

"He wants our prayers; I am going to offer mine," said the sister of mercy.

I fell into a violent weeping fit. When Sister Theresa heard of my long attachment for Ney, she mingled her tears with mine at the memory of the hero who had died defenceless. She had lost a brother at the battle of Montereau, and in her heart she bore love of her country and aversion to foreigners and the white ensign. Kind charitable soul that she was, she contrived to let me gaze upon the marshal's mortal remains. She lent me some of her own garments, and so, in the dress of a sister of mercy, I went with her to kneel at the melancholy bier. Ney looked as if wrapped in placid slumber.

How shall I say what passed through my mind during this silent contemplation? So much glory and so much honour gone forever! He who so often without concern risked his life for his country on the field of battle, he who in Russia saved so many of his countrymen from perishing, now lay before me sleeping his last sleep, struck down by French bullets! Rest in peace, noble friend of mine! Posterity, whose judgment is supreme, will vindicate your memory, will listen to your last words:

"My sentence is a breach of faith against treaties, and

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I am not allowed to invoke them. I appeal to Europe and to posterity!"

Such were my thoughts in that unforgettable hour. The fervour of a loving heart lifted itself up to heaven in prayer. Surely it found acceptance. For a great peace came over me as I knelt there on the ground beside Sister Theresa. She at length obliged me to rise, and took me away from the cruel sight. As I obeyed I reverently bent my head before the symbol of our faith, and from the bottom of my heart came a vow to live henceforth according to the religion which granted me the blessing of praying for the hero's immortal soul. His martyrdom had absolved him from that passing weakness of a glorious and honest career of twenty-five years.

Ney, thou illustrious shade, how full of hope were the supplications I poured out in the presence of thy spirit! The promise I made in the depth of my sorrow I have faithfully kept. My vow has been observed. And, holding it sacred, Ida, in keeping before her mind thy noble nature, dares to trust that her faults will be forgiven.

THE END.

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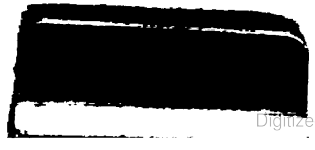

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